CHAPTER XI of Kashf al-Mahjub
by the Gnostic Ali Hujwiri

Concerning Their Imams Who Lived Subsequently To The Followers (Al-Tabi`In) Down To Our Day

1. HABIB AL-`AJAMI

His conversion (*tawbat*) was begun by Hasan of Basra. At first he was a usurer and committed all sorts of wickedness, but God gave him a sincere repentance, and he learned from Hasan something of the theory and practice of religion. His native tongue was Persian (*`ajami*) and he could not speak Arabic correctly. One evening Hasan of Basra passed by the door of his cell. Habib had uttered the call to prayer and was standing, engaged in devotion. Hasan came in, but would not pray under his leadership, because Habib was unable to speak Arabic fluently or recite the Koran correctly. The same night, Hasan dreamed that he saw God and said to Him: “O Lord, wherein does Thy good pleasure consist?” and that God answered: “O Hasan, you found My good pleasure, but did not know its value: if yester-night you had said your prayers after Habib, and if the rightness of his intention had restrained you from taking offence at his pro nunciation, I should have been well pleased with you.” It is common knowledge among Sufis that when Hasan of Basra fled from Hajjaj he entered the cell of Habib. The soldiers came and said to Habib: “Have you seen Hasan anywhere?” Habib said: “Yes.” “Where is he?” “He is in my cell.” They went into the cell, but saw no one there. Thinking that Habib was making fun of them, they abused him and called him a liar. He swore that he had spoken the truth. They returned twice and thrice, but found no one, and at last departed. Hasan immediately came out and said to Habib: “I know it was owing to thy benedictions that God did not discover me to these wicked men, but why didst thou tell them I was here?” Habib replied: “O Master, it was not on account of my benedictions that they failed to see thee, but through the blessedness of my speaking the truth. Had I told a lie, we both should have been shamed.” Habib was asked: “With what thing is God pleased?” He answered: “With a heart which is not sullied by hypocrisy,” because hypocrisy (*nifaq*) is the opposite of concord (*wifaq*), and the state of being well pleased (*rida*) is the essence of concord. There is no connexion between hypocrisy and love, and love subsists in the state of being well pleased (with whatever is decreed by God). Therefore acquiescence (*rida*) is a characteristic of God’s friends, while hypocrisy is a characteristic of His enemies. This is a very important matter. I will explain it in another place.

2. MALIK IBN DINAR

He was a companion of Hasan of Basra. Dinar was a slave, and Malik was born before his father’s emancipation. His conversion began as follows. One evening he had been enjoying himself with a party of friends. When they were all asleep a voice came from a lute which they had been playing: “O Malik! why dost thou not repent?” Malik abandoned his evil ways and went to Hasan of Basra, and showed himself steadfast in repentance. He attained to such a high degree that once when he was in a ship, and was suspected of stealing a jewel, he no sooner lifted his eyes to heaven than all the fishes in the sea came to the surface, every one carrying a jewel in its mouth. Malik took one of the jewels, and gave it to the man whose jewel was missing; then he set foot on the sea and walked until he reached the shore. It is related that he said: “The deed that I love best is sincerity in doing,” because an action only becomes an action in virtue of its sincerity. Sincerity bears the same relation to an action as the spirit to the body: as the body without the spirit is a lifeless thing, so an action without sincerity is utterly unsubstantial. Sincerity belongs to the class of internal actions, whereas acts of devotion belong to the class of external actions: the latter are completed by the former, while the former derive their value from the latter. Although a man should keep his heart sincere for a thousand years, it is not sincerity until his sincerity is combined with action; and although he should perform external actions for a thousand years, his actions do not become acts of devotion until they are combined with sincerity.

3. ABU HALIM HABIB IBN SALIM [1] **AL-RA`I**

He was a companion of Salman Farisi. He related that the Apostle said: “The believer’s intentions are better than his acts.” He had flocks of sheep, and his home was on the bank of the Euphrates. His religious Path (*tariq*) was retire ment from the world. A certain Shaykh relates as follows: “Once I passed by him and found him praying, while a wolf looked after his sheep. I resolved to pay him a visit, since he appeared to me to have the marks of greatness. When we had exchanged greetings, I said: ‘O Shaykh! I see the wolf in accord with the sheep.’ He replied: ‘That is because the shepherd is in accord with God.’ With those words he held a wooden bowl under a rock, and two fountains gushed from the rock, one of milk and one of honey. ‘O Shaykh!’ I cried, as he bade me drink, ‘how hast thou attained to this degree?’ He answered: ‘By obedience to Muhammad, the Apostle of God. O my son! the rock gave water to the people of Moses [Koran vii: 160], although they disobeyed him, and although Moses is not equal in rank to Muhammad: why should not the rock give milk and honey to me, inasmuch as I am obedient to Muhammad, who is superior to Moses?’ I said: ‘Give me a word of counsel.’ He said: ‘Do not make your heart a coffer of covetousness and your belly a vessel of unlawful things.”

My Shaykh had further traditions concerning him, but I could not possibly set down more than this (*andar waqt-i man diqi bud u bish az in mumkin na-shud*), my books having been left at Ghazna – may God guard it! – while I myself had become a captive among uncongenial folk (*dar miyan-i najinsan*) in the district of Lahawur, which is a dependency of Multan. God be praised both in joy and sorrow!

[1] MS. L has “Aslam.”

4. ABU HAZIM AL-MADANI

He was steadfast in poverty, and thoroughly versed in different kinds of self-mortification. `Amr ibn `Uthman al- Makki, who shows great zeal on his behalf (*andar amr-i way ba-jidd bashad*), relates that on being asked what he possessed he answered: “Satisfaction (*rida*) with God and independence of mankind.” A certain Shaykh went to see him and found him asleep. When he awoke he said: “I dreamed just now that the Apostle gave me a message to thee, and bade me inform thee that it is better to fulfil the duty which is owed to one’s mother than to make the pilgrimage. Return, there fore, and try to please her.” The person who tells the story turned back and did not go to Mecca. This is all that I have heard about Abu Hazim.

5. MUHAMMAD IBN WASI`

He associated with many of the Followers and with some of the ancient Shaykhs, and had a perfect knowledge of Sufism. It is related that he said: “I never saw anything without seeing God therein.” This is an advanced stage (*maqABU* of Contemplation. When a man is overcome with love for the Agent, he attains to such a degree that in looking at His act he does not see the act but the Agent only and entirely, just as when one looks at a picture and sees only the painter. The true meaning of these words is the same as in the saying of Abraham, the Friend of God (*Khalil*) and the Apostle, who said to the sun and moon and stars: “This is my Lord” (Koran vi: 76-8), for he was then overcome with longing (*shawq*), so that the qualities of his beloved appeared to him in everything that he saw. The friends of God perceive that the universe is subject to His might and captive to His dominion, and that the existence of all created things is as nothing in comparison with the power of the Agent thereof. When they look thereon with longing, they do not see what is subject and passive and created, but only the Omnipotent, the Agent, the Creator. I shall treat of this in the chapter on Contemplation. Some persons have fallen into error, and have alleged that the words of Muhammad ibn Wasi`, “I saw God therein,” involve a place of division and descent (*makan-i tajziya u hulul*), which is sheer infidelity, because place is homogeneous with that, which is contained in it, and if anyone supposes that place is created the contained object must also be created; or if the latter be eternal the former also must be eternal: hence this assertion entails two evil consequences, both of which are infidelity, viz., either that created things are eternal (*qadim*) or that the Creator is non-eternal (*muhdath*). Accordingly, when Muhammad ibn Wasi` said that he saw God in things, he meant, as I have explained above, that he saw in those things the signs and evidences and proofs of God.

I shall discuss in the proper place some subtle points con nected with this question.

6. ABU HANIFA NU`MAN IBN THABIT AL-KHARRAZ

He is the Imam of Imams and the exemplar of the Sunnites. He was firmly grounded in works of mortification and devotion, and was a great authority on the principles of Sufism. At first he wished to go into seclusion and abandon the society of mankind, for he had made his heart free from every thought of human power and pomp. One night, however, he dreamed that he was collecting the bones of the Apostle from the tomb, and choosing some and discarding others. He awoke in terror and asked one of the pupils of Muhammad ibn Sirin [1] (to interpret the dream). This man said to him: “You will attain a high rank in knowledge of the Apostle and in preserving his ordinances (*sunnat*), so that you will sift what is genuine from what is spurious.” Another time Abu Hanifa dreamed that the Apostle said to him: “You have been created for the purpose of reviving my ordinances.” He was the master of many Shaykhs, e.g. Ibrahim ibn Adham and Fudayl ibn `Iyad and Dawud Ta’i and Bishr Hafi.

In the reign of the Caliph Mansur a plan was formed to appoint to the office of Qadi one of the following persons:

Abu Hanifa, Sufyan Thawri, Mis`ar ibn Kidam, and Shurayh. While they were journeying together to visit Mansur, who had summoned them to his presence, Abu Hanifa said to his companions: “I will reject this office by means of a certain trick, Mis`ar will feign to be mad, Sufyan will run away, and Shurayh will be made Qadi.” Sufyan fled and embarked in a ship, imploring the captain to conceal him and save him from execution. The others were ushered into the presence of the Caliph. Mansur said to Abu Hanifa: “You must act as Qadi.” Abu Hanifa replied: “O Commander of the Faithful, I am not an Arab, but one of their clients; and the chiefs of the Arabs will not accept my decisions.” Mansur said: “This matter has nothing to do with lineage: it demands learning, and you are the most eminent doctor of the day.” Abu Hanifa persisted that he was unfit to hold the office. “What I have just said shows it,” he exclaimed; “for if I have spoken the truth I am disqualified, and if I have told a falsehood it is not right that a liar should be judge over Muslims, and that you should entrust him with the lives, property, and honour of your subjects.” He escaped in this way. Then Mis`ar came forward and seized the Caliph’s hand and said: “How are you, and your children, and your beasts of burden?” “Away with him,” cried Mansur, “he is mad!” Finally, Shurayh was told that he must fill the vacant office. “I am melancholic,” said he, “and light-witted,” whereupon Mansur advised him to drink ptisanes and potions (*‘asidaha-yi muwafiq u nabidhha-yi mathallath*) until his intellect was fully restored. So Shurayh was made Qadi, and Abu Hanifa never spoke a word to him again. This story illustrates not only the sagacity of Abu Hanifa, but also his adherence to the path of righteousness and salvation, and his determination not to let himself be deluded by seeking popularity and worldly renown. It shows, moreover, the soundness of blame (*malamat*), since all these three venerable men resorted to some trick in order to avoid popularity. Very different are the doctors of the present age, who make the palaces of princes their *qibla* and the houses of evildoers their temple.

Once a doctor of Ghazna, who claimed to be a learned divine and a religious leader, declared it heresy to wear a patched frock (*muraqqa`a*). I said to him: “You do not call it heretical to wear robes of brocade [2], which are made entirely of silk and, besides being in themselves

unlawful for men to wear, have been begged with importunity, which is unlawful, from evildoers whose property is absolutely unlawful. Why, then, is it heretical to wear a lawful garment, procured from a lawful place, and purchased with lawful money? If you were not ruled by inborn conceit and by the error of your soul, you would express a more judicious opinion. Women may wear a dress of silk lawfully, but it is unlawful for men, and only permissible (*mubah*) for lunatics. If you acknowledge the truth of both these state ments you are excused (for condemning the patched frock). God save us from lack of fairness!"

Yahya ibn Mu`adh al-Razi relates as follows: "I dreamed that I said to the Apostle, 'O Apostle of God, where shall I seek thee?' He answered: 'In the science of Abu Hanifa.'"

Once, when I was in Syria, I fell asleep at the tomb of Bilal the Muezzin [3], and dreamed that I was at Mecca, and that the Apostle came in through the gate of the Banu Shayba, tenderly clasping an old man to his bosom in the same fashion as people are wont to carry children; and that I ran to him and kissed the back of his foot, and stood marvelling who the old man might be; and that the Apostle was miraculously aware of my secret thought and said to me, "This is thy Imam and the Imam of thy countryman," meaning Abu Hanifa. In consequence of this dream I have great hopes for myself and also for the people of my country. It has convinced me, moreover, that Abu Hanifa was one of those who, having annihilated their natural qualities, continue to perform the ordinances of the sacred law, as appears from the fact that he was carried by the Apostle. If he had walked by himself, his attributes must have been subsistent, and such a one may either miss or hit the mark; but inasmuch as he was carried by the Apostle, his attributes must have been non-existent while he was sustained by the living attributes of the Apostle. The Apostle cannot err, and it is equally impossible that one who is sustained by the Apostle should fall into error.

When Dawud Ta'i had acquired learning and become a famous authority, he went to Abu Hanifa and said to him: "What shall I do now?" Abu Hanifa replied: "Practise what you have learned, for theory without practice is like a body without a spirit." He who is content with learning alone is not learned, and the truly learned man is not content with learning alone.

Similarly, Divine guidance (*hidayat*) involves self-mortification (*mujahadat*), without which contemplation (*mushahadat*) is un attainable. There is no knowledge without action, since knowledge is the product of action, and is brought forth and developed and made profitable by the blessings of action. The two things cannot be divorced in any way, just as the light of the sun cannot be separated from the sun itself.

[1] A well-known divine, who died in 10 A.H. See Ibn Khallikan, No. 576. An extant work of the interpretation of dreams is attributed to him (Brockelmann, I, 66).

[2] The text has *jama-i hashishi u dibaqi*. Apparently the former word should be written "khashishi". It is described in Vullers's Persian Dictionary as "a kind of garment."

[3] Bilal ibn Rabah, the Prophet's Muezzin, was buried at Damascus.

7. `ABD ALLAH IBN AL-MUBARAK AL-MARWAZI

He was the Imam of his time and consorted with many eminent Shaykhs. He is the author of celebrated works and famous miracles. The occasion of his conversion is related as follows: He was in love with a girl, and one night in winter he stationed himself at the foot of the wall of her house, while she came on to the roof, and they both stayed gazing at each other until day break. When `Abd Allah heard the call to morning prayers he thought it was time for evening prayers; and only when the sun began to shine did he discover that he had spent the whole night in rapturous contemplation of his beloved. He took warning by this, and said to himself: "Shame on thee, O son of Mubarak! Dost thou stand on foot all night for thine own pleasure, and yet become furious when the Imam reads a long chapter of the Koran?" He repented and devoted himself to study, and entered upon a life of asceticism, in which he attained such a high degree that once his mother found him asleep in the garden, while a great snake was driving the gnats away from him with a spray of basil which it held in its mouth. Then he left Merv and lived, for some time in Baghdad, associating with the Sufi Shaykhs, and also resided for some time at Mecca. When he returned to Merv, the people of the town received him with friendship and founded for him a professorial chair and a lecture hall (*dars u majlis nihadand*). At that epoch half the popu lation of Merv were followers of Tradition and the other half adherents of Opinion, just as at the present day. They called him *Radi al-fariqayn* because of his agreement with both sides, and each party claimed him as one of themselves. He built two convents (*ribat*) at Merv – one for the followers of Tradition and one for the followers of Opinion—which have retained their original constitution down to the presenb day. Afterwards he went back to the Hijaz and settled at Mecca. On being asked what wonders he had seen, he replied: "I saw a Christian monk (*rahib*), who was emaciated by self-mortification and bent double by fear of God. I asked him to tell me the way to God. He answered, 'If you knew God, you would know the way to Him.' Then he said, 'I worship Him although I do not know him, whereas you disobey Him although you know Him,' i.e. 'know ledge entails fear, yet I see that you are confident; and infidelity entails ignorance, yet I feel fear within myself'. I laid this to heart, and it restrained me from many ill deeds." It is related that `Abd Allah ibn al-Mubarak said: "Tranquillity is unlawful to the hearts of the Saints of God," for they are agitated in this world by seeking God (*talab*) and in the next world by rapture (*tarab*); they are not permitted to rest here, while they are absent from God, nor there, while they enjoy the presence, manifestation, and vision of God. Hence this world is even as the next world in their eyes, and the next world even as this world, because tranquillity of heart demands two things, either attainment of one's aim or indifference to the object of one's desire. Since He is not to be attained in this world or the next, the heart can never have rest from the palpitation of love; and since indifference is unlawful to those who love Him, the heart can never have rest from the agitations of seeking Him. This is a firm principle in the path of spiritual adepts.

8. ABU `ALI AL-FUDAYL IBN `IYAD

He is one of the paupers (*sa`alik*) of the Sufis, and one of their most eminent and celebrated men. At first he used to practise brigandage between Merv and Baward, but he was always inclined to piety, and invariably showed a generous and magnanimous disposition, so that he would not attack a caravan in which there was any woman, or take the property of anyone whose stock was small; and he let the travellers keep a portion of their property, according to the means of each. One day a merchant set out from Merv. His friends advised him to take an escort, but he said to them: "I have heard that Fudayl is a God-fearing man;" and instead of doing as they wished he hired a Koran-reader and mounted him on a camel in order that be might read the Koran aloud day and night during the journey. When they reached the place where Fudayl was lying in ambush, the reader happened to be reciting: "*Is not the time yet come unto those who believe, that their hearts should humbly submit to the admonition of God?"* (Koran lvii: 15). Fudayl's heart was softened. He repented of the business in which he was engaged, and having a written list of those whom he had robbed he satisfied all their claims upon him. Then he went to Mecca and resided there for some, time and became acquainted with certain saints of God. Afterwards he returned to Kufa, where he associated with Abu Hanifa. He has handed down relations which are held in high esteem by Traditionists, and he is the author of lofty sayings concerning the verities of Sufism and Divine Knowledge. It is recorded that he said:

"Whoever knows God as He ought to be known worships Him with all his might," because everyone who knows God acknow ledges His bounty and beneficence and mercy, and therefore loves Him; and since he loves Him he obeys Him so far as he has the power, for it is not difficult to obey those whom one loves. Accordingly, the more one loves, the more one is obedient, and love is increased by true knowledge. It is related that he said: "The world is a madhouse, and the people therein are madmen, wearing shackles and chains." Lust is our shackle and sin is our chain.

Fadl ibn Rabi` relates as follows: "I accompanied Harun al-Rashid to Mecca. When we had performed the pilgrimage, he said to me, 'Is there any man of God here that I may visit him?' I replied, 'Yes, there is `Abd al-Razzaq San`ani [1].' We went to his house and talked with him for a while. When we were about to leave, Harun bade me ask him whether he had any debts. He said, 'Yes,' and Harun gave orders that they should be paid. On coming out, Harun said to me, 'O Fadl, my heart still desires to see a man greater than this one.' I conducted him to Sufyan ibn `Uyayna [2]. Our visit ended in the same way. Harun gave orders to pay his debts and departed. Then he said to me, 'I recollect that Fudayl ibn `Iyad is here; let us go and see him.' We found him in an upper chamber, reciting a verse of the Koran. When we knocked at the door, he cried, 'Who is there?' I replied, 'The Commander of the Faithful.' 'What have I to do with the Commander of the Faithful?' said he. I said, 'Is there not an Apostolic Tradition to the effect that no one shall seek to abase himself in devotion to God?' He answered, 'Yes, but acquiescence in God's will (*rida*) is everlasting glory in the opinion of quietists: you see my abasement, but I see my exaltation.' Then he came down and opened the door, and extinguished the lamp and stood in a corner. Harun went in and tried to find him. Their hands met. Fudayl exclaimed, 'Alas! never have I felt a softer hand: 'it will be very wonderful if it escape from the Divine torment.' Harun began to weep, and wept so violently that he swooned. When he came to himself, he said, 'O Fudayl, give me a word of counsel.' Fudayl said: 'O Commander of the Faithful, thy ancestor (`Abbas) was the uncle of Mustafa. He asked the Prophet to give him dominion over men. The Prophet answered, "O my uncle, I will give thee dominion for one moment over thyself," i.e. one moment of thy obedience to God is better than a thousand years of men's obedience to thee, since dominion brings repentance on the Day of Resurrection' (*al-imdrat yawm al-qiamat nadamat*). Harun said, 'Counsel me further.' Fudayl continued: 'When `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz was appointed Caliph, he summoned Salim ibn `Abd Allah and Raja ibn Hayat, and Muhammad ibn Ka`b al-Qurazi, and said to them, "What am I to do in this affliction? for I count it an affliction, although people in general consider it to be a blessing." One of them replied: "If thou wouldst be saved tomorrow from the Divine punishment, regard the elders of the Muslims as thy fathers, and their young men as thy brothers, and their children as thy children. The whole territory of Islam is thy house, and its people are thy family. Visit thy father, and honour thy brother, and deal kindly with thy children." Then Fudayl said: 'O Commander of the Faithful, I fear lest that handsome face of thine fall into Hell-fire. Fear God and perform thy obligations to Him better than this.' Harun asked Fudayl whether he had any debts. He answered, 'Yes, the debt which I owe to God, namely, obedience to Him; woe is me, if He call me to account for it!' Harun said, 'O Fudayl, I am speaking of debts to men.' He replied, 'God be praised! His bounty towards me is great; and I have no reason to complain of Him to His servants.' Harun offered him a purse of a thousand dinars, saying, 'Use the money for some purpose of thine own.' Fuclayl said, 'O Com mander of the Faithful, my counsels have done thee no good. Here again thou art behaving wrongly and unjustly.' Harun exclaimed, 'How is that?' Fudayl said, 'I wish thee to be saved, but thou wouldst cast me into perdition: is not this unjust?' We took leave of him with tears in our eyes, and Harun said to me, 'O Fadl, Fudayl is a king indeed.'"

All this shows his hatred of the world and its people, and his contempt for its gauds, and his refusal to abase himself before worldlings for the sake of worldly gain.

[1] He died in 211A.H. See Ibn Khallikan, No. 409.

[2] Died in 168 A.H. See Ibn Khallikan, No. 266.

9. ABU 'L-FAYD DHU 'L-NUN IBN IBRAHIM AL-MISRI

He was the son of a Nubian, and his name was Thawban. He is one of the best of this sect, and one of the most eminent of their hidden spiritualists (*`ayyaran*), for he trod the path of affliction and travelled on the road of blame (*malamat*). All the people of Egypt were lost in doubt as to his true state, and did not believe in him until he was dead. On the night of his decease seventy persons dreamed that they saw

the Apostle, who said: “I have come to meet Dhu ‘l-Nun, the friend of God.” And after his death the following words were found inscribed on his forehead: This is the beloved of God, who died in love of God, slain by God. At his funeral the birds of the air gathered above his bier, and wove their wings together so as to shadow it. On seeing this, all the Egyptians felt remorse and repented of the injustice which they had done to him. He has many fine and admirable sayings on the verities of mystical knowledge. He says, for example: “The gnostic (*`arif*) is more lowly every day, because he is approaching nearer to his Lord every moment,” inasmuch as he thereby becomes aware of the awfulness of the Divine Omnipotence, and when the majesty of God has taken possession of his heart, he sees how far he is from God and that there is no way of reaching Him; hence his lowliness is increased. Thus Moses said, when he conversed with God: “O Lord, where shall I seek Thee?” God answered: “Among those whose hearts are broken.” Moses said: “O Lord, no heart is more broken and despairing than mine.” God answered: “Then, I am where thou art.” Accordingly, anyone who pretends to know God without lowliness and fear is an ignorant fool, not a gnostic. The sign of true knowledge is sincerity of will, and a sincere will cuts off all secondary causes and severs all ties of relationship, so that nothing remains except God. Dhu ‘l-Nun says: “Sincerity (*sidq*) is the sword of God on the earth: it cuts everything that it touches.” Now sincerity regards the Causer, and does not consist in affirmation of secondary causes. To affirm the latter is to destroy the principle of sincerity.

Among the stories told of Dhu ‘l-Nun I have read that one day he was sailing with his disciples in a boat on the River Nile, as is the custom of the people of Egypt when they desire recreation. Another boat was coming up, filled with merry-makers, whose unseemly behaviour so disgusted the disciples that they begged Dhu ‘l-Nun to implore God to sink the boat. Dhu ‘l-Nun raised his hands and cried: “O Lord, as Thou hast given these people a pleasant life in this world, give them a pleasant life in the next world too!” The disciples were astonished by his prayer. When the boat came nearer and those in it saw Dhu ‘l-Nun, they began to weep and ask pardon, and broke their lutes and repented unto God. Dhu ‘l-Nun said to his disciples: “A pleasant life in the next world is repentance in this world. You and they are all satisfied without harm to anyone.” He acted thus from his extreme affection towards the Muslims, following the example of the Apostle, who, notwithstanding the ill-treatment which he received from the infidels, never ceased to say: “O God! direct my people, for they know not.” Dhu ‘l-Nun relates that as he was journeying from Jerusalem to Egypt he saw in the distance some one advancing towards him, and felt impelled to ask a question. When the person came near he perceived that it was an old woman carrying a staff (*`ukkaza*) [1], and wearing a woollen tunic (*jubba*). He asked her whence she came. She answered: “From God.” “And whither goest thou?” “To God.” Dhu ‘l-Nun drew forth a piece of gold which he had with him and offered it to her, but she shook her hand in his face and cried: “O Dhu ‘l-Nun, the notion which thou hast formed of me arises from the feebleness of thy intelligence. I work for God’s sake, and accept nothing unless from Him. I worship Him alone and take from Him alone.” With these words she went on her way.

The old woman’s saying that she worked for God’s sake is a proof of her sincerity in love. Men in their dealings with God fall into two classes. Some imagine that they work for God’s sake when they are really working for themselves; and though their work is not done with any worldly motive, they desire a recompense in the next world. Others take no thought of reward or punishment in the next world, any more than of ostentation and reputation in this world, but act solely from reverence for the commandments of God. Their love of God requires them to forget every selfish interest while they do His bidding. The former class fancy that what they do for the sake of the next world they do for God’s sake, and fail to recognize that the devout have a greater self-interest in devotion than the wicked have in sin, because the sinner’s pleasure lasts only for a moment, whereas devotion is a delight for ever. Besides, what gain accrues to God from the religious exercises of man kind, or what loss from their non-performance? If all the world acted with the veracity of Abu Bakr, the gain would be wholly theirs, and if with the falsehood of Pharaoh, the loss would be wholly theirs, as God hath said: “*If ye do good, it is to yourselves, and if ye do evil it is to yourselves*” (Koran xvii: 7); and also: “*Whoever exerts himself* [in religion] *does so for his own advantage. Verily, God is independent of created beings”* (Koran xxix: 5). They seek for themselves an everlasting kingdom and say, “We are working for God’s sake”; but to tread the path of love is a different thing. Lovers, in fulfilling the Divine commandment, regard only the accomplishment of the Beloved’s will, and have no eyes for anything else.

A similar topic will be discussed in the chapter on Sincerity (*ikhlas*).

[1] According to a marginal gloss in MS. I, *`ukkaza* is a tripod on which a leathern water-bottle is suspended.

10. ABU ISHAQ IBRAHIM IBN ADHAM IBN MANSUR

He was unique in his Path, and the chief of his contemporaries. He was a disciple of the Apostle Khidr. He met a large number of the ancient Sufi Shaykhs, and associated with the Imam Abu Hanifa, from whom he learned divinity (*`ilm*). In the earlier part of his life he was Prince of Balkh. One day he went to the chase, and having become separated from his suite was pursuing an antelope. God caused the antelope to address him in elegant language and say: “Wast thou created for this, orwast thou commanded to do this?” He repented, abandoned everything, and entered on the path of asceticism and abstinence. He made the acquaintance of Fudayl ibn `Iyad and Sufyan Thawri, and consorted with them. After his conversion he never ate any food except what he had earned by his own labour. His sayings on the verities of Sufism are original and exquisite. Junayd said: “Ibrahim is the key of the (mystical) sciences.” It is related that he said: “Take God as thy companion and leave mankind alone” i.e. when anyone is rightly and sincerely turned towards God, the rightness of his turning towards God requires that he should turn his back on mankind, inasmuch as the society of mankind has nothing to dc with thoughts of God. Companionship with God is sincerity in fulfilling His commands, and sincerity in devotion springs from purity of love, and pure love of God proceeds from hatred of passion and lust. Whoever is familiar with sensual affections is separated from God, and whoever is separated from sensual affections is dwelling with God. Therefore thou art all mankind in regard to thyself: turn away from thyself, and thou hast turned

away from all mankind. Thou dost wrong to turn away from mankind and towards thyself, and to be concerned with thyself, whereas the actions of all mankind are determined by the providence and predestination of God. The outward and inward rectitude (*istiqamat*) of the seeker is founded on two things, one of which is theoretical and the other practical. The former consists in regarding all good and evil as predestined by God, so that nothing in the universe passes into a state of rest or motion until God has created rest or motion in that thing; the latter consists in performing the command of God, in rightness of action towards Him, and in keeping the obligations which he Has imposed. Predestination can never become an argument for neglecting His commands. True renunciation of mankind is impossible until thou hast renounced thyself. As soon as thou hast renounced thyself, all mankind are necessary for the fulfilment of the will of God; and as soon as thou hast turned to God, thou art necessary for the accomplishment of the decree of God. Hence it is not permissible to be satisfied with mankind. If thou wilt be satisfied with anything except God, at least be satisfied with another (*ghayr*), for satisfaction with another is to regard unification (*tawhid*), whereas satisfaction with thyself is to affirm the nullity of the Creator (*ta`fil*). For this reason Shaykh Abu 'l-Hasan Saliba [1] used to say that it is better for novices to be under the authority of a cat than under their own authority, because companionship with another is for God's sake, while companionship with one's self is calculated to foster the sensual affections. This topic will be discussed in the proper place. Ibrahim ibn Adham tells the following story:

"When I reached the desert, an old man came up and said to me, 'O Ibrahim, do you know what place this is, and where you are journeying without provisions and on foot?' I knew that he was Satan. I produced from the bosom of my shirt four *daniqs* – the price of a basket which I had sold in Kufa – and cast them away and made a vow that I would perform a prayer of four hundred genuflexions for every mile that I travelled. I remained four years in the desert, and God was giving me my daily bread without any exertion on my part. During that time Khidr consorted with me and taught me the Great Name of God. Then my heart became wholly empty of 'other' (*ghayr*)."

[1] See *Nafahat*, No. 347, where he is called Abu 'l-Hlusayn Saliba.

11. BISHR IBN AL-HARITH AL-HAFI

He associated with Fudayl and was the disciple of his own maternal uncle, `Ali ibn Khashram. He was versed in the principal, as well as the derivative, sciences. His conversion began as follows. One day, when he was drunk, he found on the road a piece of paper on which was written: "*In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*" He picked it up with reverence, perfumed it, and laid in a clean place. The same night he dreamed that God said to him: "O Bishr, as thou hast made My name sweet, I swear by My glory that I will make thy name sweet both in this world and the next." Thereupon he repented and took to asceticism. So intensely was he absorbed in contemplation of God that he never put anything on his feet. When he was asked the reason of this, he said: "The Earth is His carpet, and I deem it wrong to tread on His carpet while there is anything between my foot and His carpet." This is one of his peculiar practices: in the concentration of his mind on God a shoe seemed to him a veil (between him and God). It is related that he said: "Whoever desires to be honoured in this world and exalted in the next world, let him shun three things: let him not ask a boon of anyone, nor speak ill of anyone, nor accept an invitation to eat with anyone." No man who knows the way to God will ask a boon of human beings, since to do so is a proof of his ignorance of God: if he knew the Giver of all boons, he would not ask a boon from a fellow-creature. Again, the man who speaks ill of anyone is criticizing the decree of God, inasmuch as both the individual himself and his actions are created by God; and on whom can the blame for an action be thrown except on the agent? This does not apply, however, to the blame which God has com manded us to bestow upon infidels. Thirdly, as to his saying, "Do not eat of men's food," the reason is that God is the Provider. If He makes a creature the means of giving you daily bread, do not regard that creature, but consider that the daily bread which God has caused to come to you does not belong to him but to God. If he thinks that it is his, and that he is thereby conferring a favour on you, do not accept it. In the matter of daily bread one person does not confer on another any favour at all, because, according to the opinion of the orthodox, daily bread is food (*ghidha*), although the Mu`tazilites hold it to be property (*milk*); and God, not any created being, nourishes mankind with food. This saying may be explained otherwise, if it be taken in a profane sense (*majaz*).

12. ABU YAZID TAYFUR IBN `ISA AL-BISTAMI

He is the greatest of the Shaykhs in state and dignity, so that Junayd said: "Abu Yazid holds the same rank among us as Gabriel among the angels." His grandfather was a Magian, and his father was one of the notables of Bistam. He is the author of many trustworthy relations concerning the Traditions of the Apostle, and he is one of the ten celebrated Imams of Sufism. No one before him penetrated so deeply into the arcana of this science. In all circumstances he was a lover of theology and a venerator of the sacred law, notwithstanding the spurious doctrine which has been foisted on him by some persons with the object of supporting their own heresies. From the first, his life was based on self-mortification and the practice of devotion. It is recorded that he said: "For thirty years I was active in self- mortification, and I found nothing harder than to learn divinity and follow its precepts. But for the disagreement of divines I should have utterly failed in my endeavour. The disagreement of divines is a mercy save on the point of Unification." This is true indeed, for human nature is more prone to ignorance than to knowledge, and while many things can be done easily with ignorance, not a single step can be made easily with know ledge. The bridge of the sacred law is much narrower and more dangerous than the Bridge (*Sirat*) in the next world. Therefore it behoves thee so to act in all circumstances that, if thou shouldst not attain a high degree and an eminent station, thou mayst at any rate fall within the pale of the sacred law. Even if thou lose all else, thy practices of devotion will remain with thee. Neglect of those is the worst mischief that can happen to a novice.

It is related that Abu Yazid said: "Paradise hath no value in the eyes of lovers, and lovers are veiled (from God) by their love," i.e. Paradise is created, whereas love is an uncreated attribute of God. Whoever is detained by a created thing from that which is uncreated, is without

worth and value. Created things are worthless in the eyes, of lovers. Lovers are veiled by love, because the existence of love involves duality, which is incompatible with unification (*tawhid*). The way of lovers is from oneness to oneness, but there is in love this defect, that it needs a desirer (*murid*) and an object of desire (*murad*). Either God must be the desirer and Man the desired, or vice versa. In the former case, Man's being is fixed in God's desire, but if Man is the desirer and God the object of desire, the creature's search and desire can find no way unto Him: in either case the canker of being remains in the lover. Accordingly, the annihilation of the lover in the everlastingness of love is more perfect than his subsistence through the everlastingness of love.

It is related that Abu Yazid said: "I went to Mecca and saw a House standing apart. I said, 'My pilgrimage is not accepted, for I have seen many stones of this sort.' I went again, and saw the House and also the Lord, of the House. I said, 'This is not yet real unification.' I went a third time, and saw only the Lord of the House. A voice in my heart whispered, 'O Bayazid, if thou didst not see thyself, thou wouldst not be a polytheist (*mushrik*) though thou sawest the whole universe; and since thou seest thyself, thou art a polytheist though blind to the whole universe.' Thereupon I repented, and once more I repented of my repentance; and yet once more I repented of seeing my own existence."

This is a subtle tale concerning the soundness of his state, and gives an excellent indication to spiritualists.

13. ABU `ABD ALLAH AL-HARITH IBN ASAD AL-MUHASIBI

He was learned in the principal and derivative sciences, and his authority was recognized by all the theologians of his day. He wrote a book, entitled *Ri`ayat* [1], on the principles of Sufism, as well as many other works. In every branch of learning he was a man of lofty sentiment and noble mind. He was the chief Shaykh of Baghdad in his time. It is related that he said: *Al- `ilm bi-harakat al-qulub fi mutala`at al-ghuyub ashraf min al- `amal bi-harakat al-jawarih*, i.e. he who is acquainted with the secret motions of the heart is better than he who acts with the motions of the limbs. The meaning is that knowledge is the place of perfection, whereas ignorance is the place of search, and knowledge at the shrine is better than ignorance at the door: knowledge brings a man to perfection, but ignorance does not even allow him to enter (on the way to perfection). In reality knowledge is greater than action, because it is possible to know God by means of knowledge, but impossible to attain to Him by means of action. If He could be found by action without knowledge, the Christians and the monks in their austerities would behold Him face to face and sinful believers would have no vision of Him. Therefore know ledge is a Divine attribute and action a human attribute. Some relaters of this saying have fallen into error by reading *al- `amal bi-harakat al-qulub* [2], which is absurd, since human actions have nothing to do with the motions of the heart. If the author uses this expression to denote reflection and contemplation of the inward feelings, it is not strange, for the Apostle said: "A moment's reflection is better than sixty years of devotion," and spiritual actions are in truth more excellent than bodily actions, and the effect produced by inward feelings and actions is really more complete than the effect produced by outward actions. Hence it is said: "The sleep of the sage is an act of devotion and the wakefulness of the fool is a sin," because the sage's heart is controlled (by God) whether he sleeps or wakes, and when the heart is controlled the body also is controlled. Accordingly, the heart that is controlled by the sway of God is better than the sensual part of Man which controls his outward motions and acts of self-mortification. It is related that Harith said one day to a dervish, *Kun lillah wa-illa la takun*, "Be God's or be nothing," i.e. either be subsistent through God or perish to thine own existence; either be united with Purity (*safwat*) or separated by Poverty (*faqr*); either in the state described by the words " Bow ye down to Adam" (Koran ii: 32) or in the state described by the words "*Did there not came aver Man a time when he was not anything worthy of mention?*" (Koran lxxvi: 1). If thou wilt give thyself to God of thy own free choice, thy resurrection will be through thyself, but if thou wilt not, then thy resurrection will be through God.

[1] Its full title is *Ri`dyat li-Huquq Allah*, "the observance of what is due to God."

[2] This reading is given in the Tabaqat al-Sufiyya of Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (British Museum MS., Add. 18, 520, f. 13a).

14. ABU SULAYMAN DAWUD IBN NUSAYR AL-TA'I

He was a pupil of Abu Hanifa and a contemporary of Fudayl and Ibrahim ibn Adham. In Sufism he was a disciple of Habib Ra`i. He was deeply versed in all the sciences and unrivalled in jurisprudence (*fiqh*); but he went into seclusion and turned his back on authority, and took the path of asceticism and piety. It is related that he said to one of his disciples: "If thou desirest welfare, bid farewell to this world, and if thou desirest grace (*karamat*), pronounce the *takbir* [for the *Janaza* Prayer] over the next world," i.e. both these are places of veiling (places which prevent thee from seeing God). Every kind of tranquillity (*faraghat*) depends on these two counsels. Whoever would be tranquil in body, let him turn his back on this world; and who ever would be tranquil in heart, let him clear his heart of all desire for the next world. It is a well-known story that Dawud used constantly to associate with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan [1], but would never receive the Qadi Abu Yusuf. On being asked why he honoured one of these eminent divines but refused to admit the other to his presence, he replied that Muhammad ibn al-Hasan had become a theologian after being rich and wealthy, and theology was the cause of his religious advancement and worldly abasement, whereas Abu Yusuf had become a theologian after being poor and despised, and had made theology the means of gaining wealth and power. It is related that Ma`ruf Karkhi said: "I never saw anyone who held worldly goods in less account than Dawud Ta'i; the world and its people had no value whatsoever in his eyes, and he used to regard dervishes (*fuqara*) as perfect although they were corrupt."

[1] Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and Abu Yusuf were among the best students of Imam Abu Hanifa.

15. ABU 'L-HASAN SARI IBN MUGHALLIS AL-SAQATI

He was the maternal uncle of Junayd. He was well versed in all the sciences and eminent in Sufism, and he was the first of those who have devoted their attention to the arrangement of "stations" (*maqamat*) and to the explanation of spiritual "states" (*ahwal*). Most of the Shaykhs of `Iraq are his pupils. He had seen Habib Ra`i and associated with him. He was a disciple of Ma`ruf Karkhi. He used to carry on the business of a huckster (*saqat-firush*) in the bazaar at Baghdad. When the bazaar caught fire, he was told that his shop was burnt. He replied: "Then I am freed from the care of it." Afterwards it was discovered that his shop had not been burnt, although all the shops surrounding it were destroyed. On seeing this, Sari gave all that he possessed to the poor and took the path of Sufism. He was asked how the change in him began. He answered: "One day Habib Ra`i passed, my shop, and I gave him a crust of bread, telling him to give it to the poor. He said to me, 'May God reward thee!' From the day when I heard this prayer my worldly affairs never prospered again." It is related that Sari said: "O God, whatever punishment Thou mayst inflict upon me, do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee," because, if I am not veiled from Thee, my torment and affliction will be lightened by the remembrance and contemplation of Thee; but if I am veiled from Thee, even Thy bounty will be deadly to me. There is no punishment in Hell more painful and hard to bear than that of being veiled. If God were revealed in Hell to the people of Hell, sinful believers would never think of Paradise, since the sight of God would so fill them with joy that they would not feel bodily pain. And in Paradise there is no pleasure more perfect than unveiledness (*kashf*). If the people there enjoyed all the pleasures of that place and other pleasures a hundredfold, but were veiled from God, their hearts would be utterly broken. Therefore it is the custom, of God to, let the hearts of those who love Him have vision of Him always, in order that the delight thereof may enable them to endure every tribulation; and they say in their orisons: "We deem all torments more desirable than to be veiled from Thee. When Thy beauty is revealed to our hearts, we take no thought of affliction."

16. ABU `ALI SHAQIQ IBN IBRAHIM AL-AZDI

He was versed in all the sciences – legal, practical, and theoretical – and composed many works on various branches of Sufism. He consorted with Ibrahim ibn Adham and many other Shaykhs. It is related that he said: "God hath made the pious living in their death, and hath made the wicked dead during their lives," i.e., the pious, though they be dead, yet live, since the angels utter blessings on their piety until they are made immortal by the recompense which they receive at the Resurrection. Hence, in the annihilation wrought by death they subsist through the everlastingness of retribution. Once an old man came to Shaqiq and said to him: "O Shaykh, I have sinned much and now wish to repent." Shaqiq said: "Thou hast come late." The old man answered: "No, I have come soon. Whoever comes before he is dead comes soon, though he may have been long in coming." It is said that the occasion of Shaqiq's conversion was this, that one year there was a famine at Balkh, and the people were eating one another's flesh. While all the Muslims were bitterly distressed, Shaqiq saw a youth laughing and making merry in the bazaar. The people said: "Why do you laugh? Are not you ashamed to rejoice when everyone else is mourning?" The youth said: "I have no sorrow. I am the servant of a man who owns a village as his private property, and he has relieved me of all care for my livelihood." Shaqiq exclaimed: "O Lord God, this youth rejoices so much in having a master who owns a single village, but Thou art the King of kings, and Thou hast promised to give us our daily bread; and nevertheless we have filled our hearts with all this sorrow because we are engrossed with worldly things." He turned to God and began to walk in the way of the Truth, and never troubled himself again about his daily bread. Afterwards he used to say: "I am the pupil of a youth; all that I have learned I learned from him." His humility led him to say this.

17. ABU SULAYMAN `ABD AL-RAHMAN IBN `ATIYYA AL-DARANI

He was held in honour by the Sufis and was (called) the sweet basil of hearts (*rayhan-i dilha*). He is distinguished by his severe austerities and acts of self-mortification. He was versed in the science of "time" (*`ilm-i waqt*) [1] and in knowledge of the cankers of the soul, and had a keen eye for its hidden snares. He spoke in subtle terms concerning the practice of devotion, and the watch that should be kept over the heart and the limbs. It is related that he said: "When hope predominates over fear, one's 'time' is spoilt," because "time" is the preservation of one's "state" (*hal*), which is preserved only so long as one is possessed by fear. If, on the other hand, fear predominates over hope, belief in Unity (*tawhid*) is lost, inasmuch as excessive fear springs from despair, and despair of God is polytheism (*shirk*). Accordingly, the maintenance of belief in Unity con sists in right hope, and the maintenance of "time" in right fear, and both are maintained when hope and fear are equal. Main tenance of belief in Unity makes one a believer (*mu'min*), while maintenance of "time" makes one pious (*muti`*). Hope is connected entirely with contemplation (*mushahadat*), in which is involved a firm conviction (*i`tiqad*); and fear is con nected entirely with purgation (*mujahadat*), in which is involved an anxious uncertainty (*idtirab*). Contemplation is the fruit of purgation, or, to express the same idea differently, every hope is produced by despair. Whenever a man, on account of his actions, despairs of his future welfare, that despair shows him the way to salvation and welfare and Divine mercy, and opens to him the door of gladness, and clears away sensual corruptions from his heart, and reveals to it the Divine mysteries.

Abmad ibn Abi 'l-Hawari relates that one night, when he was praying in private, he felt great pleasure. Next day he told Abu Sulayman, who replied: "Thou art a weak man, for thou still hast mankind in view, so that thou art one thing in private and another in public." There is nothing in the two worlds that is sufficiently important to hold man back from God. When a bride is unveiled to the people, the reason is that everyone may see her and that she may be honoured the more through being seen, but it is not proper that she should see anyone except the bridegroom, since she is disgraced by seeing anyone else. If all mankind should see the glory of a pious man's piety, he would suffer no harm, but if he sees the excellence of his own piety he is lost.

[1] "Time" (*waqt*) is used by Muslim mystics to denote the spiritual state in which anyone finds himself, and by which he is dominated at the moment. Here *waqt* is explained as meaning "the preservation of one's spiritual state." According to definition given by Sahl ibn `Abd

Allah al-Tustari, *waqt* is "search for knowledge of the state, i.e. the decision (*hukm*) of a man's state, which exists between him and God in this world and hereafter."

18. ABU MAHFUZ MA`RUF IBN FIRUZ AL-KARKHI

He is one of the ancient and principal Shaykhs, and was famed for his generosity and devoutness. This notice of him should have come earlier in the book, but I have placed it here in accordance with two venerable persons who wrote before me, one of them a relater of traditions and the other an independent authority (*sahib tasarruf*) – I mean Shaykh Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, who in his work adopts the arrangement which I have followed, and the Master and Imam Abu 'l-Qasim al-Qushayri, who has put the notice of Ma`ruf in the same order in the introductory portion of his book [1]. I have chosen this arrangement because Ma`ruf was the master of Sari Saqati and the disciple of Dawud Ta'i. At first Ma`ruf was a non-Muslim (*begana*), but he made profession of Islam to `Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, who held him in the highest esteem. It is related that he said: "There are three signs of generosity – to keep faith without resistance, to praise without being incited thereto by liberality, and to give without being asked." In men all these qualities are merely borrowed, and in reality they belong to God, who acts thus towards His servants. God keeps unresisting faith with those who love Him, and although they show resistance in keeping faith with Him, He only increases His kindness towards them. The sign of God's keeping faith is this, that in eternity past He called His servant to His presence without any good action on the part of His servant, and that to-day He does not banish His servant on account of an evil action. He alone praises without the incitement of liberality, for He has no need of His servant's actions, and nevertheless extols him for a little thing that he has done. He alone gives without being asked, for He is generous and knows the state of everyone and fulfils his desire unasked. Accordingly, when God gives a man grace and makes him noble, and distinguishes him by His favour, and acts towards him in the three ways mentioned above, and when that, man, as far as lies in his power, acts in the same way towards his fellow-creatures, then he is called generous and gets a reputation for generosity. Abraham the Apostle possessed these three qualities in very truth, as I shall explain in the proper place.

[1] This statement is not accurate. The notice of Ma`ruf Karkhi is the fourth in Qushayri's list of biographies at the beginning of his treatise on Sufism, and stands between the notices of Fudayl ibn `Iyad and Sari Saqati. In the Tabaqat al-Sufiyya, by Abu `Abd al-Rahman al.Sulami, the notice of Ma`ruf comes tenth in order, but occupies the same position as it does here in so far as it is preceded by the article on Abu Sulayman Darani and is folIowed by the article on Hatim al-Asamm. It appears from the next sentence that aI-Hujwiri intended to place the life of Ma`ruf between those of Dawud Ta'f and Sari Saqati (Nos. 14 and 15), but neither of the two above-mentioned authorities has adopted this arrangement.

19. ABU `ABD AL-RAHMAN HATIM IBN `ULWAN [1] **AL-ASAMM**

He was one of the great men of Balkh and one of the ancient Shaykhs of Khurasan, a disciple of Shaqiq and the teacher of Ahmad Khadruya. In all his circumstances, from beginning to end, he never once acted untruthfully, so that Junayd said:

"Hatim al-Asamm is the veracious one (*siddiq*) of our time." He has lofty sayings on the subtleties of discerning the cankers of the soul and the weaknesses of human nature, and is the author of famous works on ethics (*`ilm-i mu`amalat*). It is related that he said: "Lust is of three kinds – lust in eating, lust in speaking, and lust in looking. Guard thy food by trust in God, thy tongue by telling the truth, and thine eye by taking example (*`ibrat*)." Real trust in God proceeds from right knowledge, for those who know Him aright have confidence that He will give them their daily bread, and they speak and look with right knowledge, so that their food and drink is only love, and their speech is only ecstasy, and their looking is only contemplation. Accordingly, when they know aright they eat what is lawful, and when they speak aright they utter praise (of God), and when they look aright they behold Him, because no food is lawful except what He has given and permits to be eaten, and no praise is rightly offered to anyone in the eighteen thousand worlds except to Him, and it is not allowable to look on anything in the universe except His beauty and majesty. It is not lust when thou receivest food from Him and eatest by His leave, or when thou speakest of Him by His leave, or when thou seest His actions by His leave. On the other hand, it is lust when of thy own will thou eatest even lawful food, or of thy own will thou speakest even praise of Him, or of thy own will thou lookest even for the purpose of seeking guidance.

[1] MSS. L, I, and J read "`Unwan".

20. ABU `ABD ALLAH MUHAMMAD IBN IDRIS AL-SHAFI`I

While he was at Madina he was a pupil of the Imam Malik, and when he came to `Iraq he associated with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan. He always had a natural desire for seclusion, and used to seek an intimate comprehension of this way of life, until a party gathered round him and followed his authority. One of them was Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Then Shafi`i became occupied with seeking position and exercising his authority as Imam, and was unable to retire from the world. At first he was not favourably disposed towards aspirants to Sufism, but after seeing Sulayman Ra`i and obtaining admission to his society, he continued to seek the truth wherever he went. It is related that he said: "When you see a divine busying himself with indulgences (*rukhas*), no good thing will come from him," i.e. divines are the leaders of all classes of men, and no one may take precedence of them in any matter, and the way of God cannot be traversed without precaution and the utmost self-mortification, and to seek indulgences in divinity is the act of one who flees from self-mortification and prefers an alleviation for himself. Ordinary people seek indulgences to keep them selves within the pale of the sacred law, but the elect practise self-mortification to feel the fruit thereof in their hearts. Divines are among the elect, and when one of them is satisfied with behaving like ordinary people, nothing good will come from him. Moreover, to seek indulgences is to think lightly of God's commandment, and divines love God: a lover

does not think lightly of the command of his beloved.

A certain Shaykh relates that one night he dreamed of the Prophet and said to him: “O Apostle of God, a tradition has come down to me from thee that God hath upon the earth saints of diverse rank (*awtad u awliya u abrar*).” The Apostle said that the relater of the tradition had transmitted it correctly, and in answer to the Shaykh’s request that he might see one of these holy men, he said: “Muhammad ibn Idris is one of them.”

21. THE IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL

He was distinguished by devoutness and piety, and was the guardian of the Traditions of the Apostle. Sufis of all sects regard him as blessed. He associated with great Shaykhs, such as Dhu ‘l-Nun of Egypt, Bishr al-Hafi, Sari al-Saqati, Ma`ruf al-Karkhi, and others. His miracles were manifest and his intelligence sound. The doctrines attributed to him to-day by certain Anthropomorphists are inventions and forgeries; he is to be acquitted of all notions of that sort. He had a firm belief in the principles of religion, and his creed was approved by all the divines. When the Mu`tazilites came into power at Baghdad, they wished to extort from him a confession that the Koran was created, and though he was a feeble old man they put him to the rack and gave him a thousand lashes. In spite of all this he would not say that the Koran was created. While he was undergoing punishment his *izar* became untied. His own hands were fettered, but another hand appeared and tied it. Seeing this evidence, they let him go. He died, however, of the wounds inflicted on that occasion. Shortly before his death some persons visited him and asked what he had to say about those who flogged him. He answered: “What should I have to say? They flogged me for God’s sake, thinking that I was wrong and that they were right. I will not claim redress from them at the Resurrection for mere blows.” He is the author of lofty sayings on ethics. When questioned on any point relating to practice he used to answer the question himself, but if it was a point of mystical theory (*haqa’iq*) he would refer the questioner to Bishr Hafi. One day a man asked him: “What is sincerity (*ikhlas*)?” He replied: “To escape from the cankers of one’s actions,” i.e. let thy actions be free from ostentation and hypocrisy and self-interest. The questioner then asked: “What is trust (*tawakkul*)?” Ahmad replied: “Confidence in God, that He will provide thy daily bread.” The man asked: “What is acquiescence (*rida*)?” He replied: “To commit, thy affairs to God.” “And what is love (*mahabbat*)?” Ahmad said: “Ask this question of Bishr Hafi for I will not answer it while he is alive.” Ahmad ibn Hanbal was constantly exposed to persecution: during his life by the attacks of the Mu`tazilites, and after his death by the suspicion of sharing the views of the Anthropomorphists. Consequently the orthodox Muslims are ignorant of his true state and hold him suspect. But he is clear of all that is alleged against him.

22. ABU ‘L-HASAN AHMAD IBN ABI ‘L-HAWARI

He was one of the most eminent of the Syrian Shaykhs and is praised by all the leading Sufis. Junayd said: “Ahmad ibn Abi ‘l-Hawari is the sweet basil of Syria (*rayhanat al-Sham*).” He was the pupil of Abu Sulayman Darani, and associated with Sufyan ibn `Uyayna and Marwan ibn Mu`awiya the Koran-reader (*al-Qari*) [1]. He had been a wandering devotee (*sayyah*). It is related that he said: “This world is a dung-hill and a place where dogs gather; and one who lingers there is less than a dog, for a dog takes what he wants from it and goes, but the lover of the world never departs from it or leaves it at any time.” At first he was a student and attained the rank of the Imams, but afterwards he threw all his books into the sea, and said: “Ye were excellent guides, but it is impossible to occupy one’s self with a guide after one has reached the goal,” because a guide is needed only so long as the disciple is on the road: when the shrine comes into sight the road and the gate are worthless. The Shaykhs have said that Ahmad did this in the state of intoxication (*sukr*). In the mystic Path he who says “I have arrived” has gone astray. Since arriving is non-accomplishment, occupation is (superfluous) trouble, and freedom from occupation is idleness, and in either case the principle of union (*wusul*) is non-existence, for both occupation and its opposite are human qualities. Union and separation alike depend on the eternal will and providence of God. Hence it is impossible to attain to union with Him. The terms “nearness” and “neighbourhood” are not applicable to God. A man is united to God when God holds him in honour, and separated from God when God holds him in contempt. I, `Ali ibn `Uthman al-Jullabi, say that possibly that eminent Shaykh in using the word “union” (*wusul*) may have meant “discovery of the way to God”, for the way to God is not found in books; and when the road lies plain before one no explanation is necessary. Those who have attained true knowledge have no use for speech, and even less for books. Other Shaykhs have done the same thing as Ahmad ibn Abi ‘l-Hawari, for example the Grand Shaykh Abu Sa`id Fadl Allah ibn Muhammad al-Mayhani, and they have been imitated by a number of formalists whose only object is to gratify their indolence and ignorance. It would seem that those noble Shaykhs acted as they did from the desire of severing all worldly ties and making their hearts empty of all save God. This, however, is proper only in the intoxication of commencement (*ibtida*) and in the fervour of youth. Those who have become fixed (*mutamakkin*) are not veiled (from God) by the whole universe: how, then, by a sheet of paper? It may be said that the destruction of a book signifies the impossibility of expressing the real meaning (of an idea). In that case the same impossibility should be predicated of the tongue, because spoken words are no better than written ones. I imagine that Ahmad ibn Abi ‘l-Hawari, finding no listener in his fit of ecstasy, wrote down an explanation of his feelings on pieces of paper, and having amassed a large quantity, did not regard them as suitable to be divulged and accordingly cast them into the water. It is also possible that he had collected many books, which diverted him from his devotional practices, and that he got rid of them for this reason.

[1] Marwan ibn Mu`awiya al-Fazari of Kufa died in 193 A.H. See Dhahabi’s *Tabaqdt al-Huffaz*, ed. by Wustenfeld, p. 63, No. 44. Al-Qari is probably a mis-transcription of al-Fazari.

23. ABU HAMID AHMAD IBN KHADRIUYA AL-BALKHI

He adopted the path of blame (*malamat*) and wore a soldier’s dress. His wife, Fatima, daughter of the Amir of Balkh, was renowned as a

Sufi. When she desired to repent (of her former life), she sent a message to Ahmad bidding him ask her in marriage of her father. Ahmad refused, whereupon she sent another message in the following terms: “O Ahmad, I thought you would have been too manly to attack those who travel on the way to God. Be a guide (*rahbar*), not a brigand (*rahbur*).” Ahmad asked her in marriage of her father, who gave her to him in the hope of receiving his blessing. Fatima renounced all traffic with the world and lived in seclusion with her husband. When Ahmad went to visit Bayazid she accompanied him, and on seeing Bayazid she removed her veil and talked to him without embarrassment. Ahmad became jealous and said to her: “Why dost thou take this freedom with Bayazid?” She replied: “Because you are my natural spouse, but be is my religious consort; through you I come to my desire, but through him to God. The proof is that he has no need of my society, whereas to you it is necessary.” She continued to treat Bayazid with the same boldness, until one day he observed that her hand was stained with henna and asked her why. She answered: “O Bayazid, so long as you did not see my hand and the henna I was at my ease with you, but now that your eye has fallen on me our companionship is unlawful.” Then Ahmad and Fatima came to Nishapur and abode there. The people and Shaykhs of Nishapur were well pleased with Ahmad. When Yahya ibn Mu`adh al-Razi passed through Nishapur on his way from Rayy to Balkh, Ahmad wished to give him a banquet, and consulted with Fatima as to what things were required. She told him to procure so many oxen and sheep, such and such a quantity of sweet herbs, condiments, candles, and perfumes, and added, “We must also kill twenty donkeys.” Ahmad said: “What is the sense of killing donkeys?” “Oh!” said she, “when a noble comes as guest to the house of a noble the dogs of the quarter have something too.” Bayazid said of her: “Whoever wishes to see a man dis guised in women’s clothes, let him look at Fatima!“ And Abu Hafs Haddad says: “But for Ahmad ibn Khadruya generosity would not have been displayed.” He has lofty sayings to his credit, and faultless utterances (*anfas-i mu hadhdhab*), and is the author of famous works in every branch of ethics and of brilliant discourses on mysticism. It is related that he said: “The way is manifest and the truth is clear, and the shepherd has uttered his call; after this if anyone loses himself, it is through his own blindness,” i.e., it is wrong to seek the way, since the way to God is like the blazing sun; do thou seek thyself, for when thou hast found thyself thou art come to thy journey’s end, inasmuch as God is too manifest to admit of His being sought. He is recorded to have said: “Hide the glory of thy poverty,” i.e., do not say to people, “I am a dervish,” lest thy secret be discovered, for it is a great grace bestowed on thee by God. It is related that he said: “A dervish invited a rich man to a repast in the month of Ramadan, and there was nothing in his house except a loaf of dry bread. On returning home the rich man sent to him a purse of gold. He sent it back, saying, ‘This serves me right for revealing my secret to one like you.’ The genuineness of his poverty led him to act thus.”

24. ABU TURAB `ASKAR IBN AL-HUSAYN AL-NAKHSHABI AL-NASAFI

He was one of the chief Shaykhs of Khurasan, and was celebrated for his generosity, asceticism, and devoutness. He performed many miracles, and experienced marvellous ad ventures without number in the desert and elsewhere. He was one of the most noted travellers among the Sufis, and used to cross the deserts in complete disengagement from worldly things (*ba-tajrid*). His death took place in the desert of Basra. After many years had elapsed he was found standing erect with his face towards the Ka`ba, shrivelled up, with a bucket in front of him and a staff in his hand; and the wild beasts had not touched him or come near him. It is related that he said: “The food of the dervish is what he finds, and his clothing is what covers him, and his dwelling-place is wherever he alights,” i.e. he does not choose his own food or his own dress, or make a home for himself. The whole world is afflicted by these three items, and personal initiative therein keeps us in a state of distraction (*mashghuli*) while we make efforts to procure them. This is the practical aspect of the matter, but in a mystical sense the food of the dervish is ecstasy, and his clothing is piety, and his dwelling-place is the Unseen, for God hath said, “*If they stood firm in the right path, We should water them with abundant rain*” (Koran lxxii: 16); and again, “*and fair apparel; but the garment of piety, that is better*” (Koran vii: 25); and the Apostle said, “Poverty is to dwell in the Unseen.”

25. ABU ZAKARIYYA YAHYA IBN MU`ADH AL-RAZI

He was perfectly grounded in the true theory of hope in God, so that Husri says: “God had two Yahyas, one a prophet and the other a saint. Yahya ibn Zakariyya trod the path of fear so that all pretenders were filled with fear and despaired of their salvation, while Yahya ibn Mu`adh trod the path of hope so that he tied the hands of all pretenders to hope.” They said to Husri: “The state of Yahya ibn Zakariyya is well known, but what was the state of Yahya ibn Mu`adh?” He replied: “I have been told that he was never in the state of ignorance (*jahiliyyat*) and never committed any of the greater sins (*kabira*).” In the practice of devotion he showed an intense perseverance which was beyond the power of anyone else. One of his disciples said to him: “O Shaykh, thy station is the station of hope, but thy practice is the practice of those who fear.” Yahya answered:

“Know, my son, that to abandon the service of God is to go astray.” Fear and hope are the two pillars of faith. It is impossible that anyone should fall into error through practising either of them. Those who fear engage in devotion through fear of separation (from God), and those who hope engage in it through hope of union (with God). Without devotion neither fear nor hope can be truly felt, but when devotion is there this fear and hope are altogether metaphorical; and metaphors (*`ibarat*) are useless where devotion (*`ibadat*) is required. Yahya is the author of many books, fine sayings, and original precepts. He was the first of the Shaykhs of this sect; after the Orthodox Caliphs, to mount the pulpit. I am very fond of his sayings, which are delicately moulded and pleasant to the ear and subtle in substance and profitable in devotion. It is related that he said: “This world is an abode of troubles (*ashghal*) and the next world is an abode of terrors (*ahwal*), and Man never ceases to be amidst troubles or terrors until he finds rest either in Paradise or in Hell-fire.” Happy the soul that has escaped from troubles and is secure from terrors, and has detached its thoughts 1mm both worlds, and has attained to God! Yahya held the doctrine that wealth is superior to poverty. Having contracted many debts at Rayy, he set out for Khurasan. When he arrived at Balkh the people of that city detained him for some time in order that he might discourse to them, and they gave him a hundred thousand dirhams. On his way back to Rayy he was attacked by brigands, who seized the whole sum. He came in a destitute condition to Nishapur, where he died. He was

always honoured and held in respect by the people.

26. ABU HAFS `AMR IBN SALIM [1] **AL-NISHAPURI AL-HADDADI** [2]

He was an eminent Sufi, who is praised by all the Shaykhs. He associated with Abu `Abd Allah al-Abiwardi and Ahmad ibn Khadruya. Shah Shuja` came from Kirman to visit him. He did not know Arabic, and when he went to Baghdad to visit the Shaykhs there, his disciples said to one another: “It is a great shame that the Grand Shaykh of Khurasan should need an interpreter to make him understand what they say.” However, when he met the Shaykhs of Baghdad, including Junayd, in the Shuniziyya Mosque, he conversed with them in elegant Arabic, so that they despaired of rivalling his eloquence. They asked him: “What is generosity?” He said: “Let one of you begin and declare what it is.” Junayd said: “In my opinion generosity consists in not regarding your generosity and in not referring it to yourself.” Abu Hafs replied: “How well the Shaykh has spoken! but in my opinion generosity consists in doing justice and in not demanding justice.” Junayd said to his disciple: “Rise! for Abu Hafs has surpassed Adam and all his descendants (in generosity).” His conversion is related as follows. He was enamoured of a girl, and on the advice of his friends sought help from a certain Jew living in the city (*sharistan*) of Nishapur. The Jew told him that he must perform no prayers for forty days, and not praise God or do any good deed or form any good intention; he would then devise a means whereby Abu Hafs should gain his desire. Abu Hafs complied with these instructions, and after forty days the Jew made a talisman as he had promised, but it proved ineffectual. He said: “You have undoubtedly done some good deed. Think!” Abu Hafs replied that the only good thing of any sort that he had done was to remove a stone which he found on the road lest some one might stumble on it. The Jew said to him: “Do not offend that God who has not let such a small act of yours be wasted though you have neglected His commands for forty days.” Abu Hafs repented, and the Jew became a Muslim.

Abu Hafs continued to ply the trade of a blacksmith until he went to Baward and took the vows of discipleship to Abu `Abd Allah Bawardi. One day, after his return to Nishapur, he was sitting in his shop listening to a blind man who was reciting the Koran in the bazaar. He became so absorbed in listening that he put his hand into the fire and, without using the pincers, drew out a piece of molten iron from the furnace. On seeing this the apprentice fainted. When Abu Hafs came to himself he left his shop and no longer earned his livelihood. It is related that he said: “ I left work and returned to it; then work left me and I never returned to it again,” because when anyone leaves a thing by one’s own act and effort, the leaving of it is no better than the taking of it, inasmuch as all acquired acts (*aksab*) are contaminated, and derive their value from the spiritual influence which flows from the Unseen without effort on our part; which influence, wherever it descends, is united with the choice of Man and loses its pure spirituality. Therefore Man cannot properly take or leave anything; it is God who in His providence gives and takes away, and Man only takes what God has given or leaves what God has taken away. Though a disciple should strive a thousand years to win the favour of God, it would be worth less than if God received him into favour for a single moment, since everlasting future happiness is involved in the favour of past eternity, and Man has no means of escape except by the unalloyed bounty of God. Honoured, then, is he from whose state the Causer has removed all secondary causes.

[1] Nafahat, No. 44, has “Salama.” Qushayri calls him ‘Umar ibn Maslama.

[2] So MSS. L, I, and J. As for B, it has “al-Haddad “, which is the form generally used by his biographers.

27. ABU SALIH HAMDUN IBN AHMAD IBN `UMARA AL-QASSAR

He belonged to the ancient Shaykhs, and was one of those who were scrupulously devout. He attained the highest rank in jurisprudence and divinity, in which sciences he was a follower of Thawri [1]. In Sufism he was a disciple of Abu Turab Nakhshabi and `Ali Nasrabadi. When he became renowned as a theologian, the Imams and notables of Nishapur urged him to mount the pulpit and preach to the people, but he refused, saying: “My heart is still attached to the world, and therefore my words will make no impression on the hearts of others. To speak unprofitable words is to despise theology and deride the sacred law. Speech is permissible to him alone whose silence is injurious to religion, and whose speaking would remove the injury.” On being asked why the sayings of the early Muslims were more beneficial than those of his contemporaries to men’s hearts, he replied: “Because they discoursed for the glory of Islam and the salvation of souls and the satisfaction of the Merciful God, whereas we discourse for the glory of ourselves and the quest of worldly gain and the favour of mankind.” Whoever speaks in accordance with God’s will and by Divine impulsion, his words have a force and vigour that makes an impression on the wicked, but if anyone speaks in accordance with his own will, his words are weak and tame and do not benefit his hearers.

[1] The words *madhhabs-i Thawri dasht* may refer either to Abu Thawr Ibrahim ibn Khalid, a pupil of al-Shafi`i, who died in 246 A.H., or to Sufyan al-Thawri. See Ibn Khallikan, No. 143.

28. ABU ‘L-SARI MANSUR IBN `AMMAR

He belonged to the school of `Iraq, but was approved by the people of Khurasan. His sermons were unequalled for beauty of language and elegance of exposition. He was learned in all the branches of divinity, in traditions, sciences, principles, and practices. Some aspirants to Sufism exaggerate his merits beyond measure. It is related that he said: “Glory be to Him who hath made the hearts of gnostics vessels of praise (*dhikr*), and the hearts of ascetics vessels of trust (*tawakkul*), and the hearts of those who trust (*mutawakkilin*) vessels of acquiescence (*rida*), and the hearts of dervishes (*fuqara*) vessels of contentment, and the hearts of worldlings vessels of covetousness!” It is worth while to consider that whereas God has placed in every member of the body and in every sense a homogeneous quality, e.g., in the hands that of seizing, in the feet that of walking, in the eye seeing, in the ear hearing, He has placed in each individual heart a diverse quality and a different desire, so that one is the seat of knowledge, another of error, another of contentment, another of covetousness, and so on:

hence the marvels of Divine action are in nothing manifested more clearly than in human hearts. And it is, related that he said: "All mankind may be reduced to two types – the man who knows himself, and whose business is self-mortification and discipline, and the man who knows his Lord, and whose business is to serve and worship and please Him." Accordingly, the worship of the former is discipline (*riyadat*), while the worship of the latter is sovereignty (*riasat*): the former practises devotion in order that he may attain a high degree, but the latter practises devotion having already attained all. What a vast difference between the two! One subsists in self-mortification (*muja hadat*), the other in contemplation (*mushahadat*). And it is related that he said: "There are two classes of men: those who have need of God – and they hold the highest rank from the standpoint of the sacred law – and those who pay no regard to their need of God, because they know that God has provided for their creation and livelihood and death and life and happiness and misery: they need God alone, and having him are independent of all else." The former, through seeing their own need, are veiled from seeing the Divine providence, whereas the latter, through not seeing their own need, are unveiled and independent. The former enjoy felicity, but the latter enjoy the Giver of felicity.

29. ABU `ABD ALLAH AHMAD IBN `ASIM AL-ANTAKI

He lived to a great age and associated with the ancient Shaykhs, and was acquainted with those who belonged to the third generation after the Prophet (*atba` al-tabi`in*). He was a contemporary of Bishr and Sari, and a pupil of Harith Muhasibi. He had seen Fudayl and consorted with him. It is related that he said: "The most beneficial poverty is that which you regard as honourable, and with which you are well pleased," i.e., the honour of the vulgar consists in affirmation of secondary causes, but the honour of the dervish consists in denying secondary causes and in affirming the Causer, and in referring everything to Him, and in being well pleased with His decrees. Poverty is the non-existence of secondary causes, whereas wealth is the existence of secondary causes. Poverty detached from a secondary cause is with God, and wealth attached to a secondary cause is with itself. Therefore secondary causes involve the state of being veiled (from God), while their absence involves the state of unveiledness. This is a clear explanation of the superiority of poverty to wealth.

30. ABU MUHAMMAD `ABD ALLAH IBN KHUBAYQ

He was an ascetic and scrupulously devout. He has related trustworthy traditions, and in jurisprudence, as well as in the practice and theory of divinity, he followed the doctrine of Thawri, with whose pupils he had associated. It is recorded that he said: "Whoever desires to be living in his life, let him not admit covetousness to dwell in his heart," because the covetous man is dead in the toils of his covetousness, which is like a seal on his heart; and the sealed heart is dead. Blessed is the heart that dies to all save God and, lives through God, inasmuch as God has made His praise (*dhikr*) the glory of men's hearts, and covetousness their disgrace; and to this effect is the saying of `Abd Allah ibn Khubayq: "God created men's hearts to be the homes of His praise, but they have become the homes of lust; and nothing can clear them of lust except an agitating fear or a restless desire." Fear and desire (*shawq*) are the two pillars of faith. When faith is settled in the heart, praise and contentment accompany it, not covetousness and heedlessness. Lust and covetousness are the result of shunning the society of God. The heart that shuns the society of God knows nothing of faith, since faith is intimate with God and averse to associate with aught else.

31. ABU 'L-QASIM AL-JUNAYD IBN MUHAMMAD IBN AL-JUNAYD AL-BAGHDADI

He was approved by externalists and spiritualists alike. He was perfect in every branch of science, and spoke with authority on theology, jurisprudence, and ethics. He was a follower of Thawri. His sayings are lofty and his inward state perfect, so that all Sufis unanimously acknowledge his leadership. His mother was the sister of Sari Saqati, and Junayd was the disciple of Sari. One day Sari was asked whether the rank of a disciple is ever higher than that of his spiritual director. He replied: "Yes; there is manifest proof of this: the rank of Junayd is above mine." It was the humility and insight of Sari that caused him to say this. As is well known, Junayd refused to discourse to his disciples so long as Sari was alive, until one night he dreamed that the Apostle said to him: "O Junayd, speak to the people, for God hath made thy words the means of saving a multitude of mankind." When he awoke the thought occurred to him that his rank was superior to that of Sari, since the Apostle had commanded him to preach. At daybreak Sari sent a disciple to Junayd with the following message: "You would not discourse to your disciples when they urged you to do so, and you rejected the intercession of the Shaykhs of Baghdad and my personal entreaty. Now that the Apostle has commanded you, obey his orders." Junayd said: "That fancy went out of my head. I perceived that Sari was acquainted with my outward and inward thoughts in all circumstances, and that his rank was higher than mine, since he was acquainted with my secret thoughts, whereas I was ignorant of his state. I went to him and begged his pardon, and asked him how he knew that I had dreamed of the Apostle. He answered: 'I dreamed of God, who told me that He had sent the Apostle to bid you preach.'" This anecdote contains a clear indication that spiritual directors are in every case acquainted with the inward experiences of their disciples.

It is related that he said: "The speech of the prophets gives information concerning presence (*hudur*), while the speech of the saints (*siddiqin*) alludes to contemplation (*mushahadat*)." True information is derived from sight, and it is impossible to give true information of anything that one has not actually witnessed, whereas allusion (*isharat*) involves reference to another thing. Hence the perfection and ultimate goal of the saints is the beginning of the state of the prophets. The distinction between prophet (*nabi*) and saint (*wali*), and the superiority of the former to the latter, is plain, notwithstanding that two heretical sects declare the saints to surpass the prophets in excellence. It is related that he said: "I was eagerly desirous of seeing Iblis. One day, when I was standing in the mosque, an old man came through the door and turned his face towards me. Horror seized my heart. When he came near I said to him, 'Who art thou? for I cannot bear to look on thee, or think of thee.' He answered, 'I am he whom you desired to see.' I exclaimed, 'O accursed one! what hindered thee from bowing down to Adam?' He answered, 'O Junayd, how can you imagine that I should bow down to anyone except God?' I was amazed at his saying this, but a secret voice whispered: 'Say to him, *Thou liest. Hadst thou been an obedient servant thou wouldst not have transgressed His command.*' Iblis heard the voice in my heart. He cried out and said, 'By God, you have burnt me!' and vanished." This

story shows that God preserves His saints in all circumstances from the guile of Satan. One of Junayd's disciples bore him a grudge, and after leaving him returned one day with the intention of testing him. Junayd was aware of this and said, replying to his question: "Do you want a formal or a spiritual answer?" The disciple said: "Both." Junayd said: "The formal answer is that if you had tested yourself you would not have needed to test me. The spiritual answer is that I depose you from your saintship." The disciple's face im mediately turned black. He cried, "The delight of certainty (*yaqin*) is gone from my heart," and earnestly begged to be forgiven, and abandoned his foolish self-conceit. Junayd said to him: "Did not you know that God's saints possess mysterious powers? You cannot endure their blows." He cast a breath at the disciple, who forthwith resumed his former purpose and repented of criticizing the Shaykhs.

32. ABU 'L-HASAN AHMAD IBN MUHAMMAD AL-NURI

He has a peculiar doctrine in Sufism and is the model of a number of aspirants to Sufism, who follow him and are called Nuris. The whole body of aspirants to Sufism is composed of twelve sects, two of which are condemned (*mardud*), while the remaining ten are approved (*maqbul*). The latter are the Muhasibis, the Qassaris, the Tayfuris, the Junaydis, the Nuris, the Sahlis, the Hakimis, the Kharrazis, the Khafifis, and the Sayyaris. All these assert the truth and belong to the mass of orthodox Muslims. The two condemned sects are, firstly, the Hululis [1], who derive their name from the doctrine of incarnation (*hulul*) and incorporation (*imtizaj*), and with whom are connected the Salimi sect of anthropomorphists [2] and secondly, the Hallajis, who have abandoned the sacred law and have adopted heresy, and with whom are connected the Ibahatis [3] and the Farisis [4]. I shall include in this book a chapter on the twelve sects and shall explain their different doctrines.

Nuri took a praiseworthy course in rejecting flattery and indulgence and in being assiduous in self-mortification. It is related that he said: "I came to Junayd and found him seated in the professorial chair (*musaddar*). I said to him: 'O Abu 'l-Qasim, thou hast concealed the truth from them and they have put thee in the place of honour; but I have told them the troth and they have pelted me with stones,'" because flattery is compliance with one's desire and sincerity is opposition to it, and men hate anyone who opposes their desires and love anyone who, complies with their desires. Nuri was the companion of Junayd and the disciple of Sari. He had associated with many Shaykhs, and had met Ahmad ibn Abi '1-Hawari. He is the author of subtle precepts and fine sayings on various branches of the mystical science. It is related that he said: "Union with God is separation from all else, and separation from all else is union with Him," i.e., anyone whose mind is united with God is separated from all besides, and vice versa: therefore union of the mind with God is separation from the thought of created things, and to be rightly turned away from phenomena is to be rightly turned towards God. I have read in the Anecdotes that once Nuri stood in his chamber for three days and nights, never moving from his place or ceasing to wail. Junayd went to see him and said: "O Abu 'l-Hasan, if thou knowest that crying aloud to God is of any use, tell me, in order that I too may cry aloud; but if thou knowest that it avails naught, surrender thyself to acquiescence in God's will, in order that thy heart may rejoice." Nuri stopped wailing and said: "Thou teachest me well, O Abu 'l-Qasim!" It is related that he said: "The two rarest things in our time are a learned man who practises what he knows and a gnostic who speaks from the reality of his state," i.e., both learning and gnosis are rare, since learning is not learning unless it is practised, and gnosis is not gnosis unless it has reality. Nuri referred to his own age, but these things are rare at all times, and they are rare to-day. Anyone who should occupy himself in seeking for learned men and gnostics would waste his time and would not find them. Let him be occupied with himself in order that he may see learning everywhere, and let him turn from himself to God in order that he may see gnosis everywhere. Let him seek learning and gnosis in himself, and let him demand practice and reality from himself. It is related that Nuri said: "Those who regard things as determined by God turn to God in everything," because they find rest in regarding the Creator, not created objects, whereas they would always be in tribulation if they considered things to be the causes of actions. To do so is polytheism, for a cause is not self-subsistent, but depends on the Causer. When they turn to Him they escape from trouble.

[1]. MS. B has "the Hulmanis", i.e. the followers of Abu Hu1man of Damascus. See Shahristani, Haarbrucker's translation, ii, 417.

[2] The Salimis are described (ibid.) as "a number of scholastic theologians (mutakallimun) belonging to Basra."

[3] "Ibahati" or "Ibahi" signifies "one who regards everything as permissible ".

[4] See the eleventh section of the fourteenth chapter.

33. ABU `UTHMAN SA`ID IBN ISMA`IL AL-HIRI

He is one of the eminent Sufis of past times. At first he associated with Yahya ibn Mu`adh; then he consorted for a while with Shah Shuja` of Kirman, and accompanied him to Nishapur on a visit to Abu Hafs, with whom he remained to the end of his life. It is related on trustworthy authority that he said: "In my childhood I was continually seeking the Truth, and the externalists inspired me with a feeling of abhorrence. I perceived that the sacred law concealed a mystery under the superficial forms which are followed by the vulgar. When I grew up I happened to hear a discourse by Yahya ibn Mu`adh of Rayy, and I found there the mystery that was the object of my search. I continued to associate with Yahya until, on hearing reports of Shah Shuja` Kirmani from a number of persons who had been in his company, I felt a longing to visit him. Accordingly I quitted Rayy and set out for Kirman. Shah Shuja`, however, would not admit me to his society. 'You have been nursed,' said he, 'in the doctrine of hope (*raja*), on which Yahya takes his stand. No one who has imbibed this doctrine can tread the path of purgation, because a mechanical belief in hope produces indolence.' I besought him earnestly, and lamented and stayed at his door for twenty days. At length he admitted me, and I remained in his society until he took me with him to visit Abu Hafs at Nishapur. On this occasion Shah Shuja` was wearing a coat (*qaba*). When Abu Hafs saw him he rose from his seat and advanced to meet him, saying, 'I have

found in the coat what I sought in the cloak (`*aba*).' During our residence in Nishapur I conceived a strong desire to associate with Abu Hafs, but was restrained from devoting myself to attendance on him by my respect for Shah Shuja`. Meanwhile I was imploring God to make, it possible for me to enjoy the society of Abu Hafs without hurting the feelings of Shah Shuja`, who was a jealous man; and Abu Hafs was aware of my wishes. On the day of our departure I dressed myself for the journey, although I was leaving my heart with Abu Hafs. Abu Hafs said familiarly to Shah Shuja`, 'I am pleased with this youth; let him stay here.' Shah Shuja` turned to me and said, 'Do as the Shaykh bids thee.' So I remained with Abu Hafs and experienced many wonderful things in his company." God caused Abu `Uthman to pass through three "stations" by means of three spiritual directors, and these "stations ", which he indicated as belonging to them, he also made his own: the "station" of hope through associating with Yahya, the "station" of jealousy through associating with Shah Shuja`, and the "station" of affection (*shafaqat*) through associating with Abu Hafs. It is allowable for a disciple to associate with five or six or more directors and to have a different "station" revealed to him by each one of them, but it is better that he should not confuse his own "station" with theirs. He should point to their perfection in that "station" and say: "I gained this by associating with them, but they were superior to it." This is more in accordance with good manners, for spiritual adepts have nothing to do with "stations" and "states".

To Abu `Uthman was due the divulgation of Sufism in Nishapur and Khurasan. He consorted with Junayd, Ruwaym, Yusuf ibn al-Husayn, and Muhammad ibn Fadl al-Balkhi, and no Shaykh ever derived as much spiritual advantage from his directors as he did. The people of Nishapur set up a pulpit that he might discourse to them on Sufism. He is the author of sublime treatises on various branches of this science. It is related that he said: "It behoves one whom God hath honoured with gnosis not to dishonour himself by disobedience to God." This refers to actions acquired by Man and to his continual effort to keep the commandments of God, because, even though you recognize that it is worthy of God not, to dishonour by disobedience anyone whom He has honoured with gnosis, yet gnosis is God's gift and disobedience is Man's act. It is impossible that one who is honoured with God's gift should be dishonoured by his own act. God honoured Adam with knowledge: He did not dishonour him on account of his sin.

34. ABU `ABD ALLAH AHMAD IBN YAHYA AL-JALLA

He associated with Junayd and Abu 'l-Hasan Nuri and other great Shaykhs. It is recorded that he said: "The mind of the gnostic is fixed on his Lord; he does not pay attention to anything else," because the gnostic knows nothing except gnosis, and since gnosis is the whole capital of his heart, his thoughts are entirely bent on vision (of God), for distraction of thought produces cares, and cares keep one back from God. He tells the following story: "One day I saw a beautiful Christian boy. I was amazed at his loveliness and stood still opposite him. Junayd passed by me. I said to him, 'O master, will God burn a face like this in Hell-fire?' He answered: 'O my son, this is a trick of the flesh, not a look by which one takes warning. If you look with due consideration, the same marvel is existent in every atom of the universe. You will soon be punished for this want of respect.' When Junayd turned away from me I immediately forgot the Koran, and it did not come back to my memory until I had' for years implored God to help me and had repented of my sin. Now I dare not pay heed to any created object or waste my time by looking at things."

35. ABU MUHAMMAD RUWAYM IBN AHMAD

He was an intimate friend of Junayd. In jurisprudence he followed Dawud [*al-Zahiri* of Isfahan], and he was deeply versed in the sciences relating to the interpretation and reading of the Koran. He was famed for the loftiness of his state and the exaltedness of his station, and for his journeys in detachment from the world (*tajrid*), and for his severe austerities. Towards the end of his life he hid himself among the rich and gained the Caliph's confidence, but such was the perfection of his spiritual rank that he was not thereby veiled from God. Hence Junayd said: "We are devotees occupied (with the world), and Ruwaym is a man occupied (with the world) who is devoted (to God)." He wrote several works on Sufism, one of which, entitled *Ghalat al-Wajidin* [i.e. "The Errors of Ecstatic Persons"], deserves particular mention. I am exceedingly fond of it. One day he was asked, " How are you?" He replied: "How is he whose religion is his lust and whose thought is (fixed on) his worldly affairs, who is neither a pious God-fearing man nor a gnostic and one of God's elect?" This refers to the vices of the soul that is subject to passion and regards lust as its religion. Sensual men consider anyone to be devout who complies with their inclinations, even though he be a heretic, and anyone to be irreligious who thwarts their desires, even though he be a pietist. This is a widely spread disease at the present time. God save us from associating with any such person! Ruwaym doubtless gave this answer in reference to the inward state of the questioner, which he truly diagnosed, or it may be that God had temporarily allowed him to fall into that condition, and that he described himself as he then was in reality.

36. ABU YA`QUB YUSUF IBN AL-HUSAYN AL-RAZI

He was one of the ancient Shaykhs and great Imams of his age. He was a disciple of Dhu 'l-Nun the Egyptian, and consorted with a large number of Shaykhs and performed service to them all. It is related that he said: "The meanest of mankind is the covetous dervish and he who loves his beloved, and the noblest of them is the veracious (*al-siddiq*)." Covetousness renders the dervish ignominious in both worlds, because he is already despicable in the eyes of worldlings, and only becomes more despicable if he builds any hopes on them. Wealth with honour is far more perfect than poverty with disgrace. Covetousness causes the dervish to incur the imputation of sheer mendacity. Again, he who loves his beloved is the meanest of mankind, since the lover acknowledges himself to be very despicable in comparison with his beloved and abases himself before her, and this also is the result of desire. So long as Zulaykha desired Yusuf, she became every day more mean: when she cast desire away, God gave her beauty and youth back to her. It is a law that when the lover advances, the beloved retires. If the lover is satisfied with love alone, then the beloved draws near. In truth, the lover has honour only while he has no desire for union. Unless his love diverts him from all thought of union or separation, his love is weak.

37. ABU 'L-HASAN SUMNUN IBN `ABD ALLAH AL-KHAWWAS

He was held in great esteem by all the Shaykhs. They called him Sumnun the Lover (*al-Muhibb*), but he called himself Sumnun the Liar (*al-Kadhdhab*). He suffered much persecution at the hands of Ghulam al-Khalil [1], who had made himself known to the Caliph and courtiers by his pretended piety and Sufism. This hypocrite spoke evil of the Shaykhs and dervishes, hoping to bring about their banishment from Court and to establish his own power. Fortunate indeed were Sumnun and those Shaykhs to have only one adversary of this sort. In the present day there are a hundred Ghulam al-Khalils for every true spiritualist, but what matter? Carrion is fit food for vultures. When Sumnun gained eminence and popularity in Baghdad, Ghulam al-Khalil began to intrigue. A woman had fallen in love with Sumnun and made, proposals to him, which he refused. She went to Junayd, begging him to advise Sumnun to marry her. On being sent away by Junayd, she came to Ghulam al-Khalil and accused Sumnun of having attempted her virtue. He listened eagerly to her slanders, and induced the Caliph to command that Sumnun should be put to death. When the Caliph was about to give the word to the executioner his tongue stuck in his throat. The same night he dreamed that his empire would last no longer than Sumnun's life. Next day he asked his pardon and restored him to favour. Sumnun is the author of lofty sayings and subtle indications concerning the real nature of love. On his way from the Hijaz the people of Fayd requested him to discourse to them about this subject. He mounted the pulpit, but while he was speaking all his hearers departed. Sumnun turned to the lamps and said: "I am speaking to you." Immediately all the lamps collapsed and broke into small bits. It is related that he said: "A thing can be explained only by what is more subtle, than itself: there is nothing subtler than love: by what, then, shall love be explained?" The meaning of this is that love cannot be explained because explanation is an attribute of the explainer. Love is an attribute of the Beloved, therefore no explanation of its real nature is possible.

[1] Abu `Abd Allah Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ghalib ibn Khalid al-Basri al-Bahili, generally known as Ghulam Khalil, died in 275 A.H. He is described by Abu 'I- Mahasin (*Nujum*, ii, 79, 1 ff.) as a traditionist, ascetic, and saint. According to the *Tadhkirat al-Awliya* (ii, 48, 4 ff.), he represented to the Caliph that Junayd, Nuri, Shibli, and other eminent Sufis were freethinkers and heretics, and urged him to put them to death.

38. ABU 'L-FAWARIS SHAH SHUJA` AL-KIRMANI

He was of royal descent. He associated with Abu Turab Nakhshabi and many other Shaykhs. Something has been said of him in the notice of Abu `Uthman al-Hiri. He com posed a celebrated treatise on Sufism as well as a book entitled *Mir'at al-Hukama* [i.e. "The Mirror of the Sages"]. It is recorded that he said "The eminent have eminence until they see it, and the saints have saintship until they see it," i.e., whoever regards his eminence loses its reality, and whoever regards his saintship loses its reality. His biographers relate that for forty years he never slept; then he fell asleep and dreamed of God. "O Lord," he cried, "I was seeking Thee in nightly vigils, but I have found Thee in sleep." God answered: "O Shah, you have found Me by means of those nightly vigils: if you had not sought Me there, you would not have found Me here."

39. `AMR IBN `UTHMAN AL-MAKKI

He was one of the principal Sufis, and is the author of celebrated works on the mystical sciences. He became a disciple of Junayd after he had seen Abu Sa`id Kharraz and had associated with [Abu `Abd Allah Sa`id ibn Yazid al-] Nibaji. He was the Imam of his age in theology. It is related that he said: "Ecstasy does not admit of explanation, because it is a secret between God and the true believers." Let men seek to explain it as they will, their explanation is not that secret, inasmuch as all human power and effort is divorced from the Divine mysteries. It is said that when `Amr came to Isfahan a young man associated with him against the wish of his father. The young man fell into a sickness. One day the Shaykh with a number of friends came to visit him. He begged the Shaykh to bid the singer (*qawwal*) chant a few verses, where upon `Amr desired the singer to chant:

Ma li maridtu wa-lam ya`udni `a'id

Minkum wa-yamradu `abdukum fa-a`udu

"How is it that when I fell ill none of you visited me,

Though I visit your slave when he falls ill?"

On hearing this the invalid left his bed and sat down, and the violence of his malady was diminished. He said: "Give me some more." So the singer chanted:

Wa-ashaddu min maradi `alayya sudud ukum

Wa-sududu `abdikumu `alayya shadidu.

"Your neglect is more grievous to me than my sickness;

It would grieve me to neglect your slave."

The young man's sickness departed from him. His father permitted him to associate with `Amr and repented of the suspicion which he had

harboured in his heart, and the youth became an eminent Sufi.

40. ABU MUHAMMAD SAHL IBN `ABD ALLAH AL-TUSTARI

His austerities were great and his devotions excellent. He has fine sayings on sincerity and the defects of human actions. The formal divines say that he combined the Law and the Truth (*jama`a bayn al-shari`at wa 'l-haqiqat*). This statement is erroneous, for the two things have never been divided. The Law is the Truth, and the Truth is the Law. Their assertion is founded on the fact that the sayings of this Shaykh are more intelligible and easy to apprehend than is sometimes the case. Inasmuch as God has joined the Law to the Truth, it is impossible that His saints should separate them. If they be separated, one must inevitably be rejected and the other accepted. Rejection of the Law is heresy, and rejection of the Truth is infidelity and polytheism. Any (proper) separation between them is made, not to establish a difference of meaning, but to affirm the Truth, as when it is said: "The words *there is no god save Allah* are Truth, and the words *Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah* are Law." No one can separate the one from the other without impairing his faith, and it is vain to wish to do so. In short, the Law is a branch of the Truth: knowledge of God is Truth, and obedience to His command is Law. These formalists deny whatever does not suit their fancy, and it is dangerous to deny one of the fundamental principles of the Way to God. Praise be to Allah for the faith which He has given us! And it is related that he said: "The sun does not rise or set upon anyone on the face of the earth who is not ignorant of God, unless he prefers God to his own soul and spirit and to his present and future life," i.e., if anyone cleaves to self-interest, that is a proof that he is ignorant of God, because knowledge of God requires abandonment of forethought (*tadbir*), and abandonment of forethought is resignation (*taslim*), whereas perseverance in forethought arises from ignorance of predestination.

41. ABU `ABD ALLAH MUHAMMAD IBN AL-FADL AL-BALKHI

He was approved by the people of `Iraq as well as by those of Khurasan. He was a pupil of Ahmad ibn Khadruya, and Abu `Uthman of Hira had a great affection for him. Having been expelled from Balkh by fanatics on account of his love of Sufism, he went to Samarqand, where he passed his life. It is related that he said: "He that has most knowledge of God is he that strives hardest to fulfil His commandments, and follows most closely the custom of His Prophet." The nearer one is to God the more eager one is to do His bidding, and the farther one is from God the more averse one is to follow His Apostle; It is related that he said: "I wonder at those who cross deserts and wildernesses to reach His House and Sanctuary, because the traces of His prophets are to be found there: why do not they cross their own passions and lusts to reach their hearts, where they will find the traces of their Lord?" That is to say, the heart is the seat of knowledge of God and is more venerable than the Ka`ba, to which men turn in devotion. Men are ever looking towards the Ka`ba, but God is ever looking towards the heart. Wherever the heart is, my Beloved is there; wherever His decree is, my desire is there; wherever the traces of my prophets are, the eyes of those whom I love are directed there.

42. ABU `ABD ALLAH MUHAMMAD IBN `ALI AL-TIRMIDHI

He is the author of many excellent books which, by their eloquence, declare the miracles vouchsafed to him, e.g., the *Khatm al-Wilayat* [i.e. "The Seal of Saintship"], the *Kitab al-Nahj* [i.e. "The Book of the Highway"], the *Nawadir al-Usul* [i.e. "Choice Principles"], and many more, such as the *Kitab al-Tawhid* [i.e. "The Book of Unification"] and the *Kitab `Adhab al-Qabr* [i.e. "The Book of the Torment of the Tomb"]: it would be tedious to mention them all. I hold him in great veneration and am entirely devoted to him. My Shaykh said: "Muhammad is a union pearl that has no like in the whole world." He has also written works on the formal sciences, and is a trustworthy authority for the traditions of the Prophet which he related. He began a commentary on the Koran, but did not live long enough to finish it. The completed portion is widely circulated among theologians. He studied jurisprudence with an intimate friend of Abu Hanifa. The inhabitants of Tirmidh call him Muhammad Hakim, and the Hakimis, a Sufi sect in that region, are his followers. Many remarkable stories are told of him, as for instance that he associated with the Apostle Khidr. His disciple, Abu Bakr Warraq, relates that Khidr used to visit him every Sunday, and that they conversed with each other. It is recorded that he said: "Anyone who is ignorant of the nature of servantship (*`ubudiyyat*) is yet more ignorant of the nature of lordship (*rububiyyat*)," i.e., whoever does not know the way to knowledge of himself does not know the way to knowledge of God, and whoever does not recognize the con tamination of human qualities does not recognize the purity of the Divine attributes, inasmuch as the outward is connected with the inward, and he who claims to possess the former without the latter makes an absurd assertion. Knowledge of the nature of lordship depends on having right principles of servantship, and is not perfect without them. This is a very profound and instructive saying. It will be fully explained in the proper place.

43. ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD IBN `UMAR AL-WARRAQ

He was a great Shaykh and ascetic. He had seen Ahmad ibn Khadruya and associated with Muhammad ibn `Ali. He is the author of books on rules of discipline and ethics. The Sufi Shaykhs have called him "The Instructor of the Saints" (*mu'addib al-awliya*). He relates the following story: "Muhammad ibn `Ali handed to me some of his writings with the request that I should throw them into the Oxus. I had not the heart to do so, but placed them in my house and came to him and told him that I had carried out his order. He asked me what I had seen. I replied, 'Nothing.' He said, 'You have not obeyed me; return and throw them into the river.' I returned, doubting the promised sign, and cast them into the river. The waters parted and a chest appeared, with its lid open. As soon as the papers fell into it, the lid closed and the waters joined again and the chest vanished. I went back to him and told him what had occurred. He answered, 'Now you have thrown them in.' I begged him to explain the mystery. He said: 'I composed a work on theology and mysticism which could hardly be comprehended by the intellect. My brother Khidr desired it of me, and God bade the waters bring it to him.'"

It is related that Abu Bakr Warraq said: "There are three classes of men – divines (*`ulama*) and princes (*umara*) and dervishes (*fuqara*). When the divines are corrupt, piety and religion are vitiated; when the princes are corrupt, men's livelihood is spoiled; and when the dervishes are corrupt, men's morals are depraved." Accordingly, the corruption of the divines consists in covetousness, that of the princes in injustice, and that of the dervishes in hypocrisy. Princes do not become corrupt until they turn their backs on divines, and divines do not become corrupt until they associate with princes, and dervishes do not become corrupt until they seek ostentation, because the injustice of princes is due to want of knowledge, and the covetousness of divines is due to want of piety, and the hypocrisy of dervishes is due to want of trust in God.

44. ABU SA`ID AHMAD IBN `ISA AL-KHARRAZ

He was the first who explained the doctrine of annihilation (*fana*) and subsistence (*baqa*). He is the author of brilliant compositions and sublime sayings and allegories. He had met Dhu 'l-Nun of Egypt, and associated with Bishr and Sari. It is related that concerning the words of the Apostle, "Hearts are naturally disposed to love him who acts kindly towards them," he said: "Oh! I wonder at him who sees none acting kindly towards him except God, how he does not incline to God with his whole being," inasmuch as true beneficence belongs to the Lord of phenomenal objects and is conferred only upon those who have need of it; how can he who needs beneficence from others bestow it upon anyone? God is the King and Lord of all and bath need of none. Recognizing this, the friends of God behold in every gift and benefit the Giver and Benefactor. Their hearts are wholly taken captive by love of Him and turned away from everything else.

45. ABU 'L-HASAN `ALI IBN MUHAMMAD AL-ISFAHANI

According to others, his name is `Ali ibn Sahl. He was a great Shaykh. Junayd and he wrote exquisite letters to one another, and `Amr ibn `Uthman Makki went to Isfahan to visit him. He consorted with Abu Turab and Junayd. He followed a praiseworthy Path in Sufism and one that was peculiarly his own. He was adorned with acquiescence in God's will and self-discipline, and was preserved from mischiefs and con taminations. He spoke eloquently on the theory and practice of mysticism, and lucidly explained its difficulties and symbolical allusions. It is related that he said: "Presence (*hudur*) is better than certainty (*yaqin*), because presence is an abiding state (*watanat*), whereas certainty is a transient one (*khatarat*)," i.e., presence makes its abode in the heart and does not admit forgetfulness, while certainty is a feeling that comes and goes: hence those who are "present" (*hadiran*) are in the sanctuary, and those who have certainty (*muqinan*) are only at the gate. The subject of "absence" and "presence" will be discussed in a separate chapter of this book.

And he said also: "From the time of Adam to the Resur rection people cry, 'The heart, the heart!' and I wish that I might find some one to describe what the heart is or how it is, but I find none. People in general give the name of 'heart' (*dil*) to that piece of flesh which belongs to madmen and ecstatics and children, who really are without heart (*bedil*). What, then, is this heart, of which I hear only, the name?" That is to say, if I call intellect the heart, it is not the heart and if I call spirit the heart, it is not the heart; and if I call knowledge the heart, it is not the heart. All the evidences of the Truth subsist in the heart, yet only the name of it is to be found.

46. ABU 'L-HASAN MUHAMMAD IBN ISMA`IL KHAYR AL-NASSAJ

He was a great Shaykh, and in his time discoursed with eloquence on ethics and preached excellent sermons. He died at an advanced age. Both Shibli and Ibrahim Khawwas were converted in his place of meeting. He sent Shibli to Junayd, wishing to observe the respect due to the latter. He was a pupil of Sari, and was contemporary with Junayd and Abu 'l-Hasan Nuri. Junayd held him in high regard, and Abu Hamza of Baghdad treated him with the utmost consideration. It is related that he was called Khayr al-Nassaj from the following circumstance. He left Samarra, his native town, with the intention of performing the pilgrimage. At the gate of Kufa, which lay on his route, he was seized by a weaver of silk, who cried out: "You are my slave, and your name is Khayr." Deeming this to come from God, he did not contradict the weaver, and remained many years in his employment. When ever his master said "Khayr!" he answered, "At thy service" (*labbayk*), until the man repented of what he had done and said to Khayr: "I made a mistake; you are not my slave." So he departed and went to Mecca, where he attained to such a degree that Junayd said: "Khayr is the best of us" (*Khayr khayruna*). He used to prefer to be called Khayr, saying: "It is not right that I should alter a name which has been bestowed on me by a Muslim." They relate that when the hour of his death approached, it was time for the evening prayer. He opened his eyes and looked at the Angel of Death and said: "Stop! God save thee! Thou art only a servant who has received His orders, and I am the same. That which thou art commanded to do (viz, to take my life) will not escape thee, but that which I am commanded to do (viz, to perform the evening prayer) will escape me: therefore let me do as I am bidden, and then do as thou art bidden." He then called for water and cleansed himself, and performed the evening prayer and gave up his life. On the same night he was seen in a dream and was asked: "What has God done to thee?" He answered: "Do not ask me of this, but I have gained release from your world."

It is related that he said in his place of meeting: "God hath expanded the breasts of the pious with the light of certainty, and hath opened the eyes of the possessors of certainty with the light of the verities of faith." Certainty is indispensable to the pious, whose hearts are expanded with the light of certainty, and those who have certainty cannot do without the verities of faith, inasmuch as their intellectual vision consists in the light of faith. Accordingly, where faith is certainty is there, and where certainty is piety is there, for they go hand in hand with each other.

47. ABU HAMZA AL-KHURASANI

He is one of the ancient Shaykhs of Khurasan. He associated with Abu Turab, and had seen Kharraz [1]. He was firmly grounded in trust in

God (*tawakkul*). It is a well-known story that one day he fell into a pit. After three days had passed a party of travellers approached. Abu Hamza said to himself: " I will call out to them." Then he said: "No; it is not good that I seek aid from anyone except God, and I shall be complaining of God if I tell them that my God has cast me into a pit and implore them to rescue me." When they came up and saw an open pit in the middle of the road, they said: "For the sake of obtaining Divine recompense (*thawab*) we must cover this pit lest anyone should fall into it." Abu Hamza said: " I became deeply agitated and abandoned hope of life. After they blocked the mouth of the pit and departed, I prayed to God and resigned myself to die, and hoped no more of mankind. When night fell I heard a movement at the top of the pit. I looked attentively. The mouth of the pit was open, and I saw a huge animal like a dragon, which let down its tail. I knew that God had sent it arid that I should be saved in this way. I took hold of its tail and it dragged me out. A heavenly voice cried to me, 'This is an excellent escape of thine, O Au Hamza! We have saved thee from death by means of a death" (i.e. a deadly monster).

He was asked, "Who is the stranger (*gharib*)?" He replied, "He who shuns society," because the dervish has no home or society either in this world or the next, and when he is dis sociated from phenomenal existence he shuns everything, and then he is a stranger; and this is a very lofty degree.

[1] See No. 44 of this chapter.

48. ABU 'L-`ABBAS AHMAD IBN MASRUQ

He was one of the great men of Khurasan, and the Saints of God are unanimously agreed that he was one of the *Awtad*. He associated with the *Qutb*, who is the pivot of the universe. On being asked to say who the *Qutb* was, he did not declare his name but hinted that Junayd was that personage. He had done service to the Forty who possess the rank of fixity (*sahib tamkin*) and received instruction from them. It is related that he said: "If anyone takes joy in aught except God, his joy produces sorrow, and if anyone is not intimate with the service of his Lord, his intimacy produces loneliness (*wahshat*)," i.e., all save Him is perishable, and whoever rejoices in what is perishable, when that perishes becomes stricken with sorrow; and except His service all else is vain, and when the vileness of created objects is made manifest, his intimacy (with them) is wholly turned to loneliness: hence, the sorrow and loneliness of the entire universe consist in regarding that which is other (than God).

49. ABU `ABD ALLAH MUHAMMAD** [1] **IBN ISMA`IL AL-MAGHRIBI

In his time he was an approved teacher and a careful guardian of his disciples. Both Ibrahim Khawwas and Ibrahim Shaybani were pupils of his. He has lofty sayings and shining evidences, and he was perfectly grounded in detachment from this world. It is related that he said: "I never saw anyone more just than the world: if you serve her she will serve you, and if you leave her she will leave you," i.e. as long as you seek her she will seek you, but when you turn away from her and seek God she will flee from you, and worldly thoughts will no more cling to your heart.

[1] MSS. L and B have "Ahmad."

50. ABU `ALI AL-HASAN IBN `ALI AL-JUZAJANI

He wrote brilliant works on the science of ethics and the detection of spiritual cankers. He was a pupil of Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Tirmidhi, and a contemporary of Abu Bakr Warraq. Ibrahim Samarqandi was a pupil of his. It is related that he said: "All mankind are galloping on the race-courses of heedlessness, relying upon idle fancies, while they suppose them selves to be versed in the Truth and to be speaking from Divine revelation." This saying alludes to natural self-conceit and to the pride of the soul. Men, though they are ignorant, have a firm belief in their ignorance, especially ignorant Soils, who are the vilest creatures of God, just as wise Sufis are the noblest. The latter possess the Truth and are without conceit, whereas the former possess conceit and are without the Truth. They graze in the fields of heedlessness and imagine that it is the field of saintship. They rely on fancy and suppose it to be certainty. They go about with form and think it is reality. They speak from their own lust and think it is a Divine revelation. This they do because conceit is not expelled from a man's head save by vision of the majesty or the beauty of God: for in the manifestation of His beauty they see Him alone, and their conceit is annihilated, while in the revelation of His majesty they do not see themselves, and their conceit does not intrude.

51. ABU MUHAMMAD AHMAD IBN AL-HUSAYN AL-JURAYRI

He was an intimate friend of Junayd, and also associated with Sahl ibn `Abd Allah. He was learned in every branch of science and was the Imam of his day in jurisprudence, besides being well acquainted with theology. His rank in Sufism was such that Junayd said to him: "Teach my pupils discipline and train them!" He succeeded Junayd and sat in his chair. It is related that he said: "The permanence of faith and the sub sistence of religions and the health of bodies depend on three qualities: satisfaction (*iktifa*) and piety (*ittiqa*) and abstinence (*ihtima*): if one is satisfied with God, his conscience becomes good; and if one guards himself from what God has forbidden, his character becomes upright; and if one abstains from what does not agree with him, his constitution is brought into good order. The fruit of satisfaction is pure knowledge of God, and the result of piety is excellence of moral character, and the end of abstinence is equilibrium of constitution." The Apostle said, "He that prays much by night, his face is fair by day," and he also said that the pious shall come at the Resurrection "with resplendent faces on thrones of light."

52. ABU 'L-`ABBAS AHMAD IBN MUHAMMAD IBN SAHL AL-AMULI

He was always held in great respect by his contemporaries. He was versed in the sciences of Koranic exegesis and criticism, and expounded the subtleties of the Koran with an eloquence and insight peculiar to himself. He was an eminent pupil of Junayd, and had associated with Ibrahim Maristani. Abu Sa`id Kharraz regarded him with the utmost veneration, and used to declare that no one deserved the name of Sufi except him. It is related that he said: "Acquiescence in natural habits prevents a man from attaining to the exalted degrees of spirituality," because natural dispositions are the instruments and organs of the sensual part (*nafs*), which is the centre of "veiling" (*hijab*), whereas the spiritual part (*haqiqat*) is the centre of revelation. Natural dispositions become attached to two things: firstly, to this world and its accessories, and secondly, to the next world and its circumstances: to the former in virtue of homogeneousness, and to the latter through imagination and in virtue of heterogeneousness and non-cognition. Therefore they are attached to the notion of the next world, not to its true idea, for if they knew it in reality, they would break off connexion with this world, and nature would then have lost all her power and spiritual things would be revealed. There can be no harmony between the next world and human nature until the latter is annihilated, because "in the next world is that which the heart of man never conceived." The worth (*khatar*) of the next world lies in the fact that the way to it is full of danger (*khatar*). A thing that only comes into one's thoughts (*khawatir*) has little worth; and inasmuch as the imagination is incapable of knowing the reality of the next world, how can human nature become familiar with the true idea (*`ayn*) thereof? It is certain that our natural faculties can be acquainted only with the notion (*pindasht*) of the next world.

53. ABU 'L-MUGHITH AL-HUSAYN IBN MANSUR AL-HALLAJ

He was an enamoured and intoxicated votary of Sufism. He had a strong ecstasy and a lofty spirit. The Sufi Shaykhs are at variance concerning him. Some reject him, while others accept him. Among the latter class are `Amr ibn `Uthman al- Makki, Abu Ya`qub Nahrajuri, Abu Ya`qub Aqta`, `Ali ibn Sahl Isfahani, and others. He is accepted, moreover, by Ibn `Ata, Muhammad ibn Khafif, Abu 'l-Qasim Nasrabadi, and all the moderns. Others, again, suspend their judgment about him,

e.g. Junayd and Shibli and Jurayri and Husri. Some accuse him of magic and matters coming under that head, but in our days the Grand Shaykh Abu Sa`id ibn Abi 'l-Khayr and Shaykh Abu 'l-Qasim Gurgani and Shaykh Abu 'l- `Abbas Shaqani looked upon him with favour, and in their eyes he was a great man. The Master Abu 'l-Qasim Qushayri remarks that if al-Hallaj was a genuine spiritualist he is not to be banned on the ground of popular condemnation, and if he was banned by Sufism and rejected by the Truth he is not to be approved on the ground of popular approval. Therefore we leave him to the judgment of God, and honour him according to the tokens of the Truth which we have found him to possess. But of all these Shaykhs only a few deny the perfection of his merit and the purity of his spiritual state and the abundance of his ascetic practices. It would be an act of dishonesty to omit his biography from this book. Some persons pronounce his outward behaviour to be that of an infidel, and disbelieve in him and charge him with trickery and magic, and suppose that Husayn ibn Manur Hallaj is that heretic of Baghdad who was the master of Muhammad ibn Zakariyya [1] and the companion of Abu Sa`id the Carmathian; but this Husayn whose character is in dispute was a Persian and a native of Bayda, and his rejection by the Shaykhs was due, not to any attack on religion and doctrine, but to his conduct and behaviour. At first he was a pupil of Sahl ibn `Abd Allah, whom he left, without asking permission, in order to attach himself to `Amr ibn `Uthman Makki. Then he left `Amr ibn `Uthman, again without asking permission, and sought to associate with Junayd, but Junayd would not receive him. This is the reason why he is banned by all the Shaykhs. Now, one who is banned on account of his conduct is not banned on account of his principles. Do you not see that Shibli said: "Al-Hallaj and I are of one belief, but my madness saved me, while his intelligence destroyed him"? Had his religion been suspected, Shibli would not have said: "Al-Hallaj and I are of one belief." And Muhammad ibn Khafif said: "He is a divinely learned man" (*`alim-i rabbani*). Al-Hallaj is the author of brilliant compositions and allegories and polished sayings in theology and jurisprudence. I have seen fifty works by him at Baghdad and in the neighbouring districts, and some in Khuzistan and Fars and Khurasan. All his sayings are like the first visions of novices; some of them are stronger, some weaker, some easier, some more unseemly than others. When God bestows a vision on anyone, and he endeavours to describe what he has seen with the power of ecstasy and the help of Divine grace, his words are obscure, especially if he expresses himself with haste and self-admiration: then they are more repugnant to the imaginations, and incomprehensible to the minds, of those who hear them, and then people say, "This is a sublime utterance," either believing it or not, but equally ignorant of its meaning whether they believe or deny. On the other hand, when persons of true spirituality and insight have visions, they make no effort to describe them, and do not occupy themselves with self-admiration on that account, and are careless of praise and blame alike, and are undisturbed by denial and belief.

It is absurd to charge al-Hallaj with being a magician. According to the principles of Islamic orthodoxy, magic is real, just as miracles are real; but the manifestation of magic in the state of perfection is infidelity, whereas the manifestation of miracles in the state of perfection is knowledge of God (*ma`rifat*), because the former is the result of God's anger, while the latter is the corollary of His being well pleased. I will explain this more fully in the chapter on the affirmation of miracles. By consent of all Sunnites who are endowed with perspicacity, no Muslim can be a magician and no infidel can be held in honour, for contraries never meet. Husayn, as long as he lived, wore the garb of piety, consisting in prayer and praise of God and continual fasts and fine sayings on the subject of Unification. If his actions were magic, all this could not possibly have proceeded from him. Consequently, they must have been miracles, and miracles are vouchsafed only to a true saint. Some orthodox theologians reject him on the ground that his sayings are pantheistic (*ba-ma`ni-yi imtizaj u ittihad*), but the offence lies solely in the expression, not in the meaning. A person overcome with rapture has not the power of expressing himself correctly; besides, the meaning of the expression may be difficult to apprehend, so that people mistake the writer's intention, and repudiate, not his real meaning, but a notion which they have formed for themselves. I have seen at Baghdad and in the adjoining districts a number of heretics who pretend to be the followers of al-Hallaj and make his sayings an argument for their heresy (*zandaqa*) and call themselves Hallajis. They spoke of him in the same terms of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) as the Rafidis (Shi`ites) apply to `Ali. I will refute their doctrines in the chapter concerning

the different Sufi sects. In conclusion, you must know that the sayings of al-Hallaj should not be taken as a model, inasmuch as he was an ecstatic (*maghlub andar hal-i khud*), not firmly settled (*mutamakkin*), and a man needs to be firmly settled before his sayings can be considered authoritative. Therefore, although he is dear to my heart, yet his "path" is not soundly established on any principle, and his state is not fixed in any position, and his experiences are largely mingled with error. When my own visions began I derived much support from him, that is to say, in the way of evidences (*barahin*). At an earlier time I composed a book in explanation of his sayings and demonstrated their sublimity by proofs and arguments. Furthermore, in another work, entitled Minhaj I have spoken of his life from beginning to end; and now I have given some account of him in this place. How can a doctrine whose principles require to be corroborated with so much caution be followed and imitated? Truth and idle fancy never agree. He is continually seeking to fasten upon some erroneous theory. It is related that he said: *Al-alsinat mustan tiqat tahta nutqiha mustahlikat* [2], i.e. "speaking tongues are the destruction of silent hearts". Such expressions are entirely mischievous. Expression of the meaning of reality is futile. If the meaning exists it is not lost by expression, and if it is non-existent it is not created by expression. Expression only produces an unreal notion and leads the student mortally astray by causing him to imagine that the expression is the real meaning.

[1] The famous physician Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi, who died about 320 A.H. See Brockelmann, I, 233.

[2] Literally, "The tongues desire to speak, (but) under their speech they desire to perish."

54. ABU ISHAQ IBRAHIM IBN AHMAD AL-KHAWWAS

He attained a high degree in the doctrine of trust in God (*tawakkul*). He met many Shaykhs, and many signs and miracles were vouchsafed to him. He is the author of excellent works on the ethics of Sufism. It is related that he said: "All knowledge is comprised in two sentences: 'do not trouble your self with anything that is done for you, and do not neglect anything that you are bound to do for yourself,'" i.e., do not trouble yourself with destiny, for what is destined from eternity will not be changed by your efforts, and do not neglect His commandment, for you will be punished if you neglect it. He was asked what wonders he had seen. "Many wonders," he replied, "but the most wonderful was that the Apostle Khidr begged me to let him associate with me, and I refused. Not that I desired any better companion, but I feared that I should depend on him rather than on God, and that my trust in God would be impaired by consorting with him, and that in consequence of performing a work of supererogation I should fail to perform a duty incumbent on me." This is the degree of perfection.

55. ABU HAMZA AL-BAGHDADI AL-BAZZAZ

He was one of the principal Sufis scholastic theologians (*mutakalliman*). He was a pupil of Harith Muhasibi, and associated with Sari and was contemporary with Nuri and Khayr Nassaj. He used to preach in the Rusafa mosque at Baghdad. He was versed in Koranic exegesis and criticism, and related Apostolic Traditions on trustworthy authority. It was he who was with Nuri when the latter was persecuted and when God delivered the Sufis from death. I will tell this story in the place where Nuri's doctrine is explained. It is recorded that Abu Hamza said: "If thy 'self' (*nafs*) is safe from thee, thou hast done all that is due to it; and if mankind are safe from thee, thou hast paid all that is due to them," i.e., there are two obligations, one which thou owest to thy "self" and one which thou owest to others. If thou refrain thy "self" from sin and seek for it the path of future salvation, thou hast fulfilled thy obligation towards it; and if thou make others secure from thy wickedness and do not wish to injure them, thou hast fulfilled thy obligation towards them. Endeavour that no evil may befall thy "self" or others from thee: then occupy thyself with fulfilling thy obligation to God.

56. ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD IBN MUSA AL-WASITI

He was a profound theosophist, praiseworthy in the eyes of all the Shaykhs. He was one of the early disciples of Junayd. His, abstruse manner of expression caused his sayings to be regarded with suspicion by formalists (*zahiriyan*). He found peace in no city until he came to Merv. The inhabitants of Merv welcomed him on account of his amiable disposition – for he was a virtuous man – and listened to his sayings; and he passed his life there. It is related that he said: "Those who remember their praise of God (*dhikr*) are more heedless than those who forget their praise," because if anyone forgets the praise, it is no matter; but it does matter if he remembers the praise and forgets God. Praise is not the same thing as the object of praise. Neglect of the object of praise combined with thought, of the praise approximates to heedlessness more closely than neglect of the praise without thought. He who forgets, in his forgetfulness and absence, does not think that he is present (with God), but he who remembers, in his remembrance and absence from the object of praise, thinks that he is present (with God). Accordingly, to think that one is present when one is not present comes nearer to heedlessness than to be absent without thinking that one is present, for conceit (*pindasht*) is the ruin of those who seek the Truth. The more conceit, the less reality, and vice versa. Conceit really springs from the suspiciousness (*tuhmat*) of the intellect, which is produced by the insatiable desire (*nahmat*) of the lower soul; and holy aspiration (*himmat*) has nothing in common with either of these qualities. The fundamental principle of remembrance of God (*dhikr*) is either in absence (*ghaybat*) or in presence (*hudur*). When anyone is absent from himself and present with God, that state is not presence, but contemplation (*mushahadat*); and when anyone is absent from God and present with himself, that state is not remembrance of God (*dhikr*), but absence; and absence is the result of heedlessness (*ghaflat*). The truth is best known to God.

57. ABU BAKR DULAF IBN JAHDAR AL-SHIBLI

He was a great and celebrated Shaykh. He had a blameless spiritual life and enjoyed perfect communion with God. He was subtle in the use of symbolism, wherefore one of the moderns says: "The wonders of the world are three: the symbolical utterances (*isharat*) of Shibli, and the mystical sayings (*nukat*) of Murta`ish, and the anecdotes (*hikayat*) of Ja`far [1]." At first he was chief chamberlain to the Caliph, but he

was converted in the assembly-room (*majlis*) of Khayr al-Nassaj and became a disciple of Junayd. He made the acquaintance of a large number of Shaykhs. It is related that he explained the verse "*Tell the believers to refrain their eyes*" (Koran xxiv: 30) as follows: "O Muhammad, tell the believers to refrain their bodily eyes from what is unlawful, and to, refrain their spiritual eyes from everything except God," i.e. not to look at lust and to have no thought except the vision of God. It is a mark of heedlessness to follow one's lusts and to regard unlawful things, and the greatest calamity that befalls the heedless is that they are ignorant of their own faults; for anyone who is ignorant here shall also be ignorant hereafter: "*Those who are blind in lids world shall be blind in the next world*" (Koran xvii: 74). In truth, until God clears the desire of lust out of a man's heart the bodily eye is not safe from its hidden dangers, and until God establishes the desire of Himself in a man's heart the spiritual eye is not safe from looking at other than Him.

It is related that one day when Shibli came into the bazaar, the people said, "This is a madman." He replied: "You think I am mad, and I think you are sensible: may God increase my madness and your sense!" i.e., inasmuch as my madness is the result of intense love of God, while your sense is the result of great heedlessness, may God increase my madness in order that I may become nearer and nearer to Him, and may He increase your sense in order that you may become farther and farther from Him. This he said from jealousy (*ghayrat*) that anyone should be so beside one's self as not to separate love of God from madness and not to distinguish between them in this world or the next.

[1] See No. 58 in this chapter.

58. ABU MUHAMMAD JA`FAR IBN NUSAYR AL-KHULDI

He is the well-known biographer of the Saints. One of the most eminent and oldest, of Junayd's pupils, he was profoundly versed in the various branches of Sufism and paid the utmost respect to the Shaykhs. He has many sublime sayings. In order to avoid spiritual conceit, he attributed to different persons the anecdotes which he composed in illustration of each topic. It is related that he said: "Trust in God is equanimity whether you find anything or no," i.e., you are not made glad by having daily bread or sorrowful by not having it, because it is the property of the Lord, who has a better right than you either to preserve or to destroy: do not interfere, but let the Lord dispose of His own. Ja`far relates that he went to Junayd and found him suffering from a fever. "O Master," he cried, "tell God in order that He may restore thee to health." Junayd said: "Last night I was about to tell Him, but a voice whispered in my heart, 'Thy body belongs to Me: I keep it well or ill, as I please. Who art thou, that thou shouldst interfere with My property.'"

59. ABU `ALI MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM AL-RUDBARI

He was a great Sufi and of royal descent. Many signs and virtues were vouchsafed to him. He discoursed lucidly on the arcana of Sufism. It is related that he said: "He who desires (*murid*) desires for himself only what God desires for him, and he who is desired (*murad*) does not desire anything in this world or the next except God." Accordingly, he who is satisfied with the will of God must abandon his own will in order that he may desire, whereas the lover has no will of his own that he should have any object of desire. He who desires God desires only what God desires, and he whom God desires desires only God. Hence satisfaction (*rida*) is one of the "stations" (*maqamat*) of the beginning, and love (*mahabbat*) is one of the "states" (*ahwal*) of the end. The "stations" are connected with the realization of servantship (*`ubudiyyat*), while ecstasy (*mashrab*) leads to the corroboration of Lordship (*rububiyyat*). This being so, the desirer (*murid*) subsists in himself, and the desired (*murad*) subsists in God.

60. ABU 'L-`ABBAS QASIM IBN AL-MAHDI [1] **AL-SAYYARI**

He associated with Abu Bakr Wasiti and derived instruction from many Shaykhs. He was the most accomplished (*azraf*) of the Sufis in companionship (*suhbat*) and the most sparing (*azhad*) of them in friendship (*ulfat*). He is the author of lofty sayings and praiseworthy compositions. It is related that he said: "Unification (*al-tawhid*) is this: that nothing should occur to your mind except God." He belonged to a learned and influential family of Merv. Having inherited a large fortune from his father, he gave the whole of it in return for two of the Apostle's hairs. Through the blessing of those hairs God bestowed on him a sincere repentance. He fell into the company of Abu Bakr Wasiti, and attained such a high degree that he became the leader of a Sufi sect. When he was on the point of death, he gave directions that those hairs should be placed in his mouth. His tomb is still to be seen at Merv, and people come thither to seek what they desire; and their prayers are granted.

[1] Nafahat, No. 167, has "Qasim ibn a1-Qasim al-Mahdi."

61. ABU `ABD ALLAH MUHAMMAD IBN KHAFIF

He was the Imam of his age in diverse sciences. He was renowned for his mortifications and for his convincing eluci dation of mystical truths. His spiritual attainments are clearly shown by his compositions. He was acquainted with Ibn `Ata and Shibli and Husayn ibn Mansur and Jurayri, and associated at Mecca with Abu Ya`qub Nahrajuri. He made excellent journeys in detachment from the world (*tajrid*). He was of royal descent, but God bestowed on him repentance, so that he turned his back on the glories of this world. He is held in high esteem by spiritualists. It is related that he said: "Unification consists in turning away from nature," because the natures of mankind are all veiled from the bounties and blind to the beneficence of God. Hence no one can turn to God until he has turned away from nature, and the "natural" man (*sahib tab`*) is unable to apprehend the reality of Unification, which is revealed to you only when you see the corruption of your own nature.

62. ABU `UTHMAN SA`ID IBN SALLAM AL-MAGHRIBI

He was an eminent spiritualist of the class who have attained "fixity" (*ahl-i tamkin*), and was profoundly versed in various departments of knowledge. He practised austerities, and is the author of many notable sayings and excellent proofs con cerning the observation of spiritual blemishes (*ru'yat-i afat*). It is related that he said: "Whenever anyone prefers association with the rich to sitting with the poor God afflicts him with spiritual death." The terms "association" (*suhbat*) and "sitting with" (*mujalasat*) are employed, because a man turns away from the poor only when he has sat with them, not when he has associated with them; for there is no turning away in associa tion. When he leaves off sitting with the poor in order to associate with the rich, his heart becomes dead to supplication (*niyaz*) and his body is caught in the toils of covetousness (*az*). Since the result of turning away from *mujalasat* is spiritual death, how should there be any turning away from *suhbat*? The two terms are clearly distinguished from each other in this saying.

63. ABU 'L-QASIM IBRAHIM IBN MUHAMMAD IBN MAHMUD AL-NASRABADI

He was like a king in Nishapur, save that the glory of kings is in this world, while his was in the next world. Original sayings and exalted signs were vouchsafed to him. Himself a pupil of Shibli, he was the master of the later Shaykhs of Khurasan. He was the most learned and devout man of his age. It is recorded that he said: "Thou art between two relationships: one to Adam, the other to God. If thou claim relationship to Adam, thou wilt enter the arenas of lust and the places of corruption and error; for by this claim thou seekest to realize thy humanity (*bashariyyat*). God hath said: '*Verily, he was unjust and foolish*' (Koran xxxiii: 72). If, however, thou claim relationship to God, thou wilt enter the stations of revelation and evidence and protection (from sin) and saint-ship; for by this claim thou seekest to realize thy servantship (*`ubudiyyat*). God hath said: '*The servants of the Merciful are those who walk on the earth meekly'* (Koran xxv: 64)." Relation ship to Adam ends at the Resurrection, whereas the relationship of being a servant of God subsists always and is unalterable. When a man refers himself to himself or to Adam, the utmost that he can reach is to say: "*Verily, I have injured myself*" (Koran xxviii: 15); but when he refers himself to God, the son of Adam is in the same case as those of whom God hath said: "*O My servants, there is no fear for you this day*" (Koran xliii: 68).

64. ABU 'L-HASAN `ALI IBN IBRAHIM AL-HUSRI

He is one of the great Imams of the Sufis and was unrivalled in his time. He has lofty sayings and admirable explanations in all spiritual matters. It is related that he said: "Leave me alone in my affliction! Are not ye children of Adam, whom God formed with His own hand and breathed a spirit into him and caused the angels to bow down to him? Then He commanded him to do something, and he disobeyed. If the first of the wine-jar is dregs, what will its last be?" That is to say: "When a man is left to himself he is all disobedience, but when Divine favour comes to his help he is all love. Now regard the beauty of Divine favour and compare with it the ugliness of thy behaviour, and pass thy whole life in this."

I have mentioned some of the ancient Sufis whose example is authoritative. If I had noticed them all and had set forth their lives in detail and had included the anecdotes respecting them, my purpose would not have been accomplished, and this book would have run to great length. Now I will add some account of the modern Sufis.

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